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# THESIS

**TRAINING AND ORGANIZATION FOR COIN CONFLICTS: A HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE WITH CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS**

by

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December 2010

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After eight years of conventional U.S. Army involvement in Afghanistan, the Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) have remained organized and trained to defeat a peer or near-peer enemy in a direct, symmetrical conflict. The complex socio-ethnical structure of Afghanistan requires something new, but an analysis of international forces involved in a century of Counterinsurgency Operations (COIN) operations indicates a variety of metrics of successful organization and training. Something new can be found in something old. Through the analysis of historical COIN conflicts and combatants in Algeria, Philippines, Vietnam, and Afghanistan, the modern military analyst can determine effective metrics for the assessment, selection, organization and training of contemporary COIN forces. Counterinsurgency Operations are not merely a less-intense form of conflict within the Range of Military Operations, but an entirely different arc of the warfare continuum and require specialized units, operations, tactics and skills that are beyond capabilities of an organic IBCT. In the current fight, IBCTs receive a number of these enablers upon arrival into theater, and enjoy a margin of success during their tour. This thesis finds a correlation between training and organizing COIN-specific forces prior to their engagement in the conflict, and the eventual success or failure of that force in a COIN struggle. Though success in COIN comes with higher risk and is more manpower intensive, the lower technological and logistical demands warrant additional research from a force design perspective. Based on the preponderance of low-intensity conflicts over the incidents of high-intensity conflict during the post-WWII era, America may be wise in establishing designated "COIN" battalions and brigades within the standing force package.

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# TRAINING AND ORGANIZATION FOR COIN CONFLICTS: A HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE WITH CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS

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# ABSTRACT

After eight years of conventional U.S. Army involvement in Afghanistan, the Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) have remained organized and trained to defeat a peer or near-peer enemy in a direct, symmetrical conflict. The complex socio-ethnical structure of Afghanistan requires something new, but an analysis of international forces involved in a century of Counterinsurgency Operations (COIN) operations indicates a variety of metrics of successful organization and training. Something new can be found in something old. Through the analysis of historical COIN conflicts and combatants in Algeria, Philippines, Vietnam, and Afghanistan, the modern military analyst can determine effective metrics for the assessment, selection, organization and training of contemporary COIN forces. Counterinsurgency Operations are not merely a less-intense form of conflict within the Range of Military Operations, but an entirely different arc of the warfare continuum and require specialized units, operations, tactics and skills that are beyond capabilities of an organic IBCT. In the current fight, IBCTs receive a number of these enablers upon arrival into theater, and enjoy a margin of success during their tour. This thesis finds a correlation between training and organizing COIN-specific forces prior to their engagement in the conflict, and the eventual success or failure of that force in a COIN struggle. Though success in COIN comes with higher risk and is more manpower intensive, the lower technological and logistical demands warrant additional research from a force design perspective. Based on the preponderance of low-intensity conflicts over the incidents of high-intensity conflict during the post-WWII era, America may be wise in establishing designated “COIN” battalions and brigades within the standing force package

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AAR | After Action Review |
| ALN | National Liberation Army (armed branch of the FLN, Algeria) |
| ANA | Afghan National Army |
| ANP | Afghan National Police |
| ANSF | Afghan National Security Forces |
| AO | Area of Operations |
| ARVN | Army of (South) Vietnam |
| BCT | Battalion Combat Team (Philippine) |
| BCT | Brigade Combat Team (U.S.) (I-Infantry, S-Stryker, H-Heavy) |
| CAP | Combined Action Program |
| CERP | Commander's Emergency Relief Fund |
| CIA | (American) Central Intelligence Agency |
| CIDG | Civilian Irregular Defense Group |
| CMTC | Combined Maneuver Training Center |
| COCOM | (Geographic) Combatant Command |
| COIN | Counterinsurgency |
| COP | Combat Outpost |
| CSAR | Combat Search and Rescue |
| CTC | Combat Training Center |
| DOTMLPF | Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities |
| FLN | National Liberation Front (political wing of the Algerian insurgency) |
| FOB | Forward Operating Base |
| FORCEPRO | Force Protection |
| FORSCOM | Forces Command |
| FSA | Functional Solution Analysis |
| GWOT | Global War on Terror |
| HMMWV | High Mobility Multi-wheeled Vehicle |
| IO | Information Operations |
| JFCOM | Joint Forces Command |

| | |
|---|---|
| JRTC | Joint Readiness Training Center |
| MACV | Military Assistance Command, Vietnam |
| METL | Mission Essential Task List |
| MRAP | Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (vehicle) |
| MRE | Mission Readiness Exercise |
| MTOE | Modified Table of Organization and Equipment |
| NTC | National Training Center |
| NVA | North Vietnamese Army |
| OE | Operational Environment |
| OEF | Operation Enduring Freedom |
| PAF | Philippine Armed Forces |
| PAVN | People's Army of Vietnam |
| PDRA | People's Democratic Republic of Afghanistan |
| PF | Popular Forces |
| RD | Revolutionary Development |
| ROMO | Range of Military Operations |
| RSTA | Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target Acquisition |
| SF | (American) Special Forces |
| TAOR | Tactical Area of Operational Responsibility |
| TRADOC | Training and Doctrine Command |
| TTP | Technique, Tactic, and Procedure |
| UAH | Up-armored HMMWV |
| VC | Viet Cong |

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# I. INTRODUCTION

> In small wars, the goal is to gain decisive results with the least application of force and the consequent minimum loss of life. The end aim is the social, economic, and political development of the people subsequent to the military defeat of the enemy insurgent. In small wars, tolerance, sympathy, and kindness should be the keynote of our relationship with the mass of the population.[1]
>
> USMC LTG Lewis Walt

## A. PURPOSE

After nine years of conventional United States Army involvement in the conflict in Afghanistan, the combat Brigades and Battalions of the Light, Airborne, and Air Assault Divisions remain organized to defeat a peer or near-peer enemy in a direct, symmetrical conflict. Army Transformation in 2003–2004 dissolved the primacy of the Division as the metric of Army deployable power, and reorganized the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) with the ability to be more autonomous on the battlespace. The autonomy is derived from an increase in the density of combat support and combat service and support that are now organic to the BCT, versus the traditionally homogenous Infantry formations that required outside augmentation from the Division. John Nagl and Edward Luttwak assert that that Counterinsurgency Operations are not just a "lesser-included offense" of the traditional Range of Military Operations (ROMO), but an entirely different arc of conflict that requires specialized units, operations, tactics and skills that are counter to the current capabilities even of a Transformed BCT.[2]

Given the blood and treasure involved, the researcher asks is there a better way to organize the present force to fit the counterinsurgency operation in

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[1] Andrew F Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 172.

[2] Edward N. Luttwak, "Notes on Low-Intensity Conflict" in *Dimensions of Military Strategy*, edited by George Edward Thibault. (Washington: National Defense University. Press, 1987), 335. John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), xv. John Nagl, "Let's Win the Wars We're In," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 52, 1st Quarter (2009), 20–26, http://www.au.af.mil/ au/awc/ awcgate/ jfq/ nagl_win_wars.pdf (accessed 13 October 2010), 22.

Afghanistan? Before undergoing another massive reorganization, what historical evidence exists that would validate dedicating a portion of America's expeditionary forces to a more permanent counterinsurgent organization, geographically oriented, and with an optimized Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE), and specialized training regimens?

Afghanistan is not the first counterinsurgent operation that the United States and her allies have dealt with; in terms of armed conflict, the 20th century was dominated by guerrilla wars, low-intensity conflict, contingency operations, and "emergencies," many times more than conventional peer-on-peer state interstate violence. As the great colonial empires dissolved their global influence following World War II, and the ideologies of Communism and Islamism expanded, the western democratic regimes increasingly found themselves in expansive conflicts against often-invisible enemies. These enemies could conceal themselves in a disaffected native population, and the subsequent weakness of post-colonial governance often required outside assistance from the former colonial powers. In order to maintain former client states tenuous grips upon state power, the ex-colonial powers interceded with dedicated combat troops, or select groups of advisors. Post-colonial and superpower militaries were often initially outclassed through misapplication of the elements of national power, and operational planning and task organization that was based upon seeking a peer-to-near-pear direct confrontation.[3]

## B. RESEARCH QUESTION

With a few situational variances, historic expeditionary military elements that prepared and organized for a counterinsurgent fight, prior to committing to the fight, enjoyed more relative success than traditionally employed, but technologically more advanced forces. Related to this concept is the question posed by Edward Luttwak but seconded by this researcher. Given the preponderance of low-intensity, COIN-centric conflicts on an international scale,

[3] Edward N. Luttwak, "Notes on Low-Intensity Conflict," 340–41.

and the likelihood of the next conflict being of a low intensity, COIN-centric nature, is there a benefit to the United States maintaining regionally oriented, quasi-conventional COIN forces?[4] Is there a historical precedent of a nation state succeeding in COIN with a pre-organized and established COIN force, or have the successful COIN forces evolved over the duration of a struggle?

## C. METHODOLOGY

### 1. Variables and Metrics

In this study, I plan to demonstrate a historical validity that there is a correlation between the level of pre-deployment training and organization of a given COIN force, and the resultant level of success that force gains over an opponent. I will accomplish this through a comparative case study approach, in keeping with the George and Bennett models of case study construction.[5] My hypothesis is that conventional combat battalions and brigades that deploy to a COIN environment after training with their full complement of combat power and enablers are more effective in the COIN environment than units that are organized of non-organic elements from within an area of operations.

The independent variable for this experiment is the level of training and organization of historic conventional COIN forces. Rather than a mere "yes" or "no" answer, I will quantify and describe relevant training received, and how the specifics may have tied into success or failure. As the research has demonstrated, a preponderance of COIN forces adapt and evolve from their traditional skill sets while engaged in their conflicts. This is commonly conducted through leader education and training centers established within the conflict zone. I will describe the "in-theater" training of some of the more evolutionary forces, where this is an indicator of success.

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[4] Edward N. Luttwak, "Notes on Low-Intensity Conflict," 341.

[5] Alexander L George, and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 151–164.

The dependent variable is the success or failure of a COIN force; despite the best efforts of dozens of military and social science experts, normalizing specific metrics is a daunting task, especially when considering the breadth of the campaigns in this study. From the RAND study, "Victory has A Thousand Fathers", I will derive metrics to determine the relative levels of success or failure of the various forces used for COIN. The same RAND study also include metrics to determine the success or failure of the whole of the governments involved in a counterinsurgent campaign.

The basis of the RAND study is a data set of thirty counterinsurgent fights that have taken place in the international scene, from 1978 to 2006. Their data is inclusive, as every conflict that started and stopped within those two dates is included in the study; there is no statistical normalization done to the data.[6] In the RAND analysis, the authors determined 15 "good" COIN practices, and 12 "bad" COIN practices. These metrics are not perfectly opposed to one another, e.g., if the COIN force has 51% of the tangible support of an insurgency, the insurgency has the remaining 49%; some are "good" practices can counteract some "bad" practices. The RAND metrics are qualitative in nature, and lend themselves to analysis of a government and COIN force over the course of a long insurgency. While not in themselves an operational checklist, the "Good" and "Bad" practices seem worthwhile to periodically review as a COIN force progresses through a campaign, a useful mirror on one's own operations. These metrics, displayed in Table 1, serve as independent variables to the dependant variable in this study, which is victory or defeat of a COIN force in a COIN struggle (Figure 1).

[6] Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency," (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010), http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG964.html (accessed 10 October 2010), 8–9.

| 15 "Good" COIN Practices | 12 "Bad" COIN Practices |
|---|---|
| • The COIN force adhered to several strategic communication principles.<br>• The COIN force significantly reduced tangible insurgent support.<br>• The government established or maintained legitimacy in the area of conflict.<br>• The government was at least a partial democracy.<br>• COIN force intelligence was adequate to support effective engagement or disruption of insurgents.<br>• The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas.<br>• The government/state was competent.<br>• The COIN force avoided excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force.<br>• The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict.<br>• Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict controlled or claimed by the COIN force.<br>• The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported or favored the COIN force.<br>• The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas.<br>• The COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance.<br>• The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas that it controlled or claimed to control.<br>• The perception of security was created or maintained among the population in areas that the COIN force claimed to control. | • The COIN force used both collective punishment and escalating repression.<br>• The primary COIN force was an external occupier.<br>• COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents.<br>• Militias worked at cross-purposes with the COIN force or government.<br>• The COIN force resettled or removed civilian populations for population control.<br>• COIN force collateral damage was perceived by the population in the area of conflict as worse than the insurgents'.<br>• In the area of conflict, the COIN force was perceived as worse than the insurgents.<br>• The COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.<br>• The COIN force engaged in more coercion or intimidation than the insurgents.<br>• The insurgent force was individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.<br>• The COIN force or its allies relied on looting for sustainment.<br>• The COIN force and government had different goals or levels of commitment. |

Table 1. "Good" and "Bad" Practices in COIN[7]

The RAND researchers found, through analysis of the forces involved in these recent cases, a set of six key findings that correlate to successful COIN campaigns. They are:

1. Effective COIN practices tend to run in packs
2. The balance of "good" versus "bad" practices perfectly predicts outcomes
3. Tangible support trumps popular support.
4. Of 20 COIN approaches tested, 13 received strong [evidentiary] support, while three are not supported by evidence[8]

[7] Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," xviii.

5. Repression wins phases, but usually not cases
6. Poor beginnings do not necessarily lead to poor ends[9]

These findings are relative to the final tally of victory or defeat in a COIN struggle. For purposes of my analysis of the historic case studies, I will focus on the top three indicators in the above list.

As noted in the RAND study, for the COIN force, eight of the analyzed struggles are listed as "win," while 22 are listed as "loss," though the definitions of "win" and "loss" bear elucidation in Figure 1.[10] I will use this model to determine COIN force "win or loss" relative to the selected case studies.

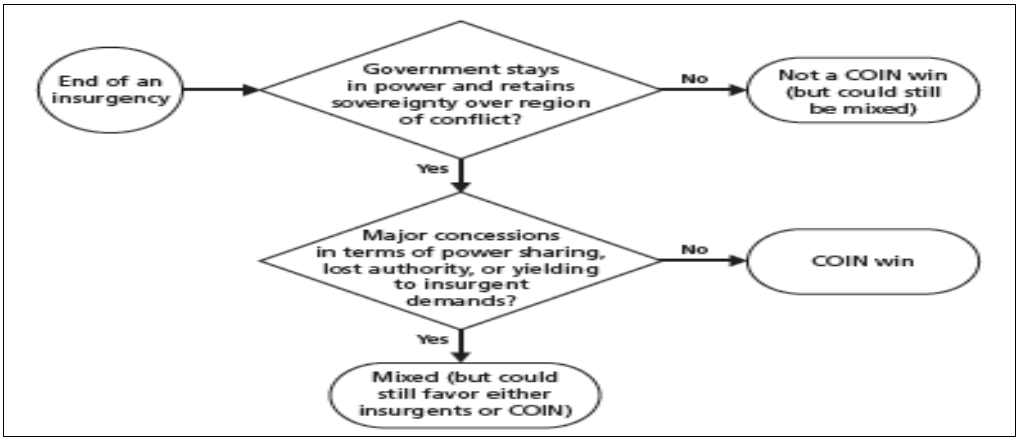


**Figure 1. COIN Metric of "Win" or "Loss"**[11]

[8] Christopher Paul, et. al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," xx. Table S.3 displays 20 distinct approaches to COIN, as identified in COIN literature by the RAND researchers. Significant to forces that succeeded in COIN are Operational approaches described as "Pacification," "Democracy," "Tangible Support Reduction," and "Flexibility and Adaptability." Significant to forces that failed at COIN (22 of the 30 case studies) were approaches such as "'Crush them,'" "Resettlement," and "Insurgent Support Strategies." Chapter 3 of the RAND study defines and operationalizes each of the 20 approaches, in detail. For simplicity, I will maintain an operational perspective of my sample of COIN forces in order to assess their effectiveness (Table 1), and will leave the strategic assessment for further research.

[9] Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," xv–xxiii. Authors define tangible support as "the ability of the insurgents to replenish and obtain personnel, material, financing, intelligence, and sanctuary." Authors define popular support as "the majority of the population in the area of conflict wanted the COIN force to win" (operationalization of popular support).

[10] Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," xvii.

[11] Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," 9, Figure 2.2.

Managing the control variables in order to conduct a case-by-case comparison is a monumental task, given the cross-section of disparate case studies selected. COIN struggles can be an undercurrent to a high intensity model of conflict, highlighted by the differences between the village war fought by USMC Combined Action Program (CAP) platoons, versus the 1–7 Cavalry experience in the A Shau Valley in 1965.[12] Insurgencies can be socio-economic motivated, but religiously fueled, as evidenced in Algeria,[13] or in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union.[14] A final archetype within the selection of insurgent case studies would be anti-colonial and tied to post-WWII communist expansion, as evidenced in the Philippines. Interspersed within the Vietnam, Philippines, and in some parts of the Afghanistan case studies are strong ethnic and/or tribal overtones that were driving factors in each of those insurgencies. In the analysis chapter, I will highlight where confounding factors within the controls may have affected the outcome, as I will also highlight key operational and strategic decisions that could have affected the overall outcome of the conflict.

The researcher must take a level of liberty with these qualitative assessments, as variations can exist even within the same conflict and Area of Operations (AO). For example, the isolated areas in which the CIA/SF Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) operated demonstrated marked reductions in SVN village chieftain intimidation/murder, school teacher murder, and income taxes/land taxes paid into the central government of SVN. These positive trends ceased when MAC-V reallocated the forces to more of a direct action/counter terrorism mission.[15] While the entirety of the COIN (pacification) campaign in Vietnam was a failure, the isolated groups of U.S.M.C. CAPs in the I Corps sector of South Vietnam were highly successful. Though highly trained as

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[12] John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, xiv-xv; Dave R. Palmer, *Summons of the Trumpet: U.S. – Vietnam in Perspective* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1977), 98–103.

[13] Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*, revised edition (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), 97.

[14] David Loyn, *In Afghanistan: Two Hundred Years of British, Russian, and American Occupation* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 138.

[15] Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, 70–71.

traditional ROMO fighters, the British used Light Infantry in Malaya in massive cordon and search operations, only later to decentralize and evolve to a more village centric force, focused on the populace.[16]

### 2. The Case Studies

There are hundreds of case studies on counterinsurgency, guerrilla wars, insurrections, and low-intensity conflict. This study will focus on conflicts in the third world of Asia and Africa in which post-colonial Europe or America engaged with expeditionary combat troops, advisors, or combinations of both. I selected the following case studies because they all involve a superpower employing an expeditionary force to an allied or client state, and conducting counterinsurgent operations. Each conflict lasted for a significant duration, long enough for theater-level modifications to the existing force and doctrine to manifest within the affected COIN force, and possibly within the institution itself. I have gathered my data through an analysis of the forces used, domestic or foreign, in the counterinsurgent struggles in Vietnam (1960-1973), Algeria (1954-1962), and Afghanistan (1979-1988), and the relative success or failures that these forces enjoyed. Primary antagonists have at their base Communist, Islamist, Nationalist, or Ethnic motivations, or combinations thereof. Algeria in 1954 was essentially a Nationalist conflict, but drew populist support through Islamist and ethnic rhetoric.[17] Vietnam in the post-Dien Bien Phu 1960s was a classic Maoist peoples' revolution, but nationalistic fervor enabled the NVA and VC to sustain horrendous losses, yet sustain the fight indefinitely.[18] The Afghan conflict of 1979-1989, provides a second, comparative view of a global superpower versus an insurgency, and the differing practices of pacification relative to the American experience in Vietnam. From the Soviet and American case studies, we can demonstrate the negative COIN effects of inflexibility within a conventional force,

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16 John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, 67–69.

17 Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*, 99–101.

18 Bernard B. Fall, *The Two Vietnams,* 363-365

with a resultant minimal evolution of that force. Not analyzed in the case studies, but noteworthy in Chapter V, is the low-intensity conflict involving the Philippines and the Hukbalahap Rebellion of the early 1950s. This was a proto-western democracy standing in opposition to a Maoist communist insurgency, and represents a level of success on two levels. The Philippine government successful integrated all aspects of national power to defeat the root causes of the insurgency, and they were willing to dramatically reorganize and prepare their armed forces prior to engaging in the contested areas.[19]

Table 2 describes the results of this study, elucidating only a partial confirmation of the hypothesis. The most successful COIN forces evolved in the theater of conflict, during the mid-to-late stages of the conflict.

| Conflict | Enemy | Incumbent Government | Specific COIN Force | Training, Selection, Organization | | | | Win or Loss |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Pure ROMO | Specially Trained | Specially Selected | Specially Organized | |
| Algeria | Islamic Nationalism | French Colonialism | French Airborne | X | | | | Loss |
| Vietnam | Communist Ethnic Nationalism | Democratic Ethnic Nationalism | USMC CAPs | | | X | X | Loss (CAP success in I Corps AOR) |
| Afghan-istan(1979-1988) | Islamic Tribal Guerrilla | Communist Central Governance with USSR backing | Soviet and PDRA Conventional Forces | X | | | | Loss |

Table 2. Comparative Results of Historic COIN Forces

No forces were committed to the initial fight task organized or trained specifically for COIN. The most poignant example of a successful unit in a failed mission is the U.S.M.C. Combined Action Platoons of the I Corps AOR; insofar as a cost-benefit analysis is concerned, 15 U.S. Marines pacified an urbanized area of five square miles,[20] and defeated two 100-140-man VC and NVA

[19] Larry E. Cable, *Conflict of Myths: The Development of American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and the Vietnam War* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 52–54.

[20] F. J. (Bing) West, *The Village* (New York, Pocket Books, 2003), 353.

deliberate attacks on their stronghold.[21] Through the entirety of the I Corps AOR, 114 CAP elements secured nearly 400,000 civilians throughout the duration of the program; an effective economy of force operation with decisive operational effects.[22]

The closest example to a purely selected, designed and trained COIN force set would be the Battalion Combat Teams (BCT) of the Philippine Army; while this force was strategic in scope, its development was also evolutionary, and the overarching success of the COIN force was tightly woven into the proper utilization of the other elements of state power. I excluded this case from the study as it did not involve the expeditionary forces of an external nation-state to the state in conflict, but the force training and development are worthy of note.

### 3. Literature Review

The literature available on COIN related topics is extensive. This summery of the source work for this study includes contemporary theory, historical reviews, historic analysis of the conflicts of the case studies, and the general study of low-intensity conflict.

To provide baseline knowledge of counterinsurgent operations and contemporary doctrine, I refer to *FM 3-24: The Counterinsurgent Field Manual* (2006), jointly composed by David Petraeus and James Amos. David Kilcullen, in both *The Accidental Guerrilla* (2009) and *Counterinsurgency* (2010), provides modern views of classical problems, and goes far toward operationalizing some of the more mundane aspects of a COIN campaign. Max Boot in *The Savage Wars Of Peace* (2002) gives excellent historical analysis of American force involvement in low-intensity conflicts, in particular the U.S.M.C. Combined Action Program in Vietnam.

[21] Peter Brush, "Civic Action: The Marine Corps Experience in Vietnam, Part I," Small Wars Journal, http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/brush.htm (Accessed 10 November 2010), 4.

[22] Peter Brush, "Civic Action: The Marine Corps Experience in Vietnam, Part I," 2.

John Nagl and Gian P. Gentile offer excellent opposing assessments on the modern force structure relative to a COIN environment; the articles “Let’s Win the Wars We’re In” and “Let’s Build an Army to Win All Wars” are found in *Joint Forces Quarterly* (2009). Nagl remains a proponent of an adaptive evolutionary armed force for America, and calls for the institutionalization of the lessons learned in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Gentile adopts the counter-argument wherein America should finish the contemporary counterinsurgent wars, and resume the business of training, equipping and manning the force for high intensity conflict. National Defense Research Institute, an element within RAND, discusses methods to transfer the reality of the ad hoc force structure and skill sets of the battlefield into the institution in *Preparing for the Proven Inevitable: An Urban Operations Training Strategy for America’s Joint Force* (2006). Edward Luttwak in his article “Notes on Low Intensity Conflict” (1987) discusses various historical COIN fights and salient principals behind them, but also offers views about the use of conventional forces in COIN fights.

Literature available on the Huk Rebellion in the Philippines is widely available. To maintain a focus on the training, development, and selection of forces utilized to conduct COIN, Edward Lansdale’s account, *In the Midst of Wars: An American’s Mission to Southeast Asia* (1972) is a primary source. Both Larry Cable in *Conflict of Myths* (1986) and Robert Taber in *The War of the Flea* (2002) serve as excellent sources for an operational and tactical assessment of the forces available, as well as overarching strategic analysis of the campaign.

Andrew Krepinevich’s work, *The U.S. Army and Vietnam* (1986), describes some of the failures of the high strategic decision makers in the Vietnam conflict, as well as an in-depth analysis of the situation the American forces were committed to. Bernard Fall in *The Two Vietnams* (1967) also discusses French and American involvement in the region; his insights as to the indices of a spreading insurgency form crucial heuristic models to understanding the environment within which a COIN force operates. Dave Palmer in *A Bright*

*Shining Lie* (1988), and Neil Sheehan in *The Summons of the Trumpet* (1978) provide literary insight into the operational and strategic nature of the Vietnam War; Sheehan in particular discusses the relevancy of the American populace, and internal politics, in the execution of a protracted war. A key resource for the tactical assessment of the U.S.M.C. CAP platoons is the account of Bing West in his work, *The Village,* originally published in 1972.

There are two classical studies of the French counterinsurgency experience in Algeria. Alistair Horne, in *A Savage War of Peace* (1979) delves into the roots of the insurgency, and the initial heavy-handed approach the French formations took to combating the Islamists; a comparative study that provides more detail to the preparation of subsequent formations exists in Alf Andrew Heggoy's tome, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria* (1972). M. Alexander, M. Evens, and J. Keiger edited a collection of personal accounts of the Algerian Experience in *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62: Experiences, Images, Testimonies* (2002), while Irwin Wall describes the limited American involvement in the conflict in *France, the United States, and the Algerian War* (2001).

Two significant works regarding Afghanistan capture the basic concept of the history of the region; both Sir Martin Ewans' *Afghanistan* (2002) and David Loyn's *In Afghanistan* (2009) form a rough skeleton of the progression of the people and the state, the various mechanisms and forms of government attempted over the centuries, and provide significant insight into the nature of the Pashtun people. Thomas Barfield in *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History (2010)*, neatly supplements these earlier perspectives, and adds contemporary analysis of the nature of the state. Tailor and Botea (2008) also addressed this concept in their article contrasting Afghanistan and Vietnam state structures, set against the Charles Tilly thesis of state-building. Lincoln Keiser develops the concept of *Pashtunwali* in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region with his book *Friend by Day, Enemy by Night* (2002); Les Grau (2010), and Robert Kaplan (2001) further analyze the tribal nature of the region, generational memories of honor

and conflict, and the predominance of the Pashtun tribes and culture, while Cynthia Mahmood (1996) provides insights into the neighboring Sikh and Punjabi militant cultures. Various authors (Grau, 1998; Combs, 2006; Kaplan, 2005) provide insight as to both Soviet and American Coalition military and aid efforts from 1979 to the present.

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# II. THE DILEMMA OF CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN COIN

> To meet future challenges, America's Army must turn from the warm and well-deserved glow of its Persian Gulf victory and embrace, once more the real business of regulars, the stinking gray shadow world of "savage wars of peace," as Rudyard Kipling called them.[23]
>
> LTG Daniel P. Bolger

## A. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

Since early February 2002, conventional Army battalions have conducted operations in Afghanistan, steadily evolving from large-scale kinetic operations to low intensity, population-centric operations.[24] Despite the success of these modified formations, and the anticipated long duration of the Global War on Terror, why are these traditional light infantry, airborne, and air assault BCTs still organized in the traditional, triangular force structure that doctrinally is best suited for operations against a peer enemy? Paul Grant emphasizes the point that extensive training is essential to prepare conventional forces for success in a COIN environment, but COIN training is often overshadowed by training events intended to maintain proficiency in ROMO tasks. I concur with his sentiment for the wars we are involved in currently, but further expand the question. Could the frictions in contemporary training be averted by selecting certain light infantry units to completely realign their focus, and orient their efforts on maintaining a regionally oriented COIN-centric METL, as opposed to attempting to prioritize every operational possibility within the Range of Military Operations?

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[23] Daniel P. Bolger, "The Ghosts of Omdurman," *Parameters* (Autumn 1991), 28–39, http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/parameters/Articles/1991/1991%20bolger.pdf (Accessed 11 November 2010). LTG Bolger is presently the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7, U.S. Army.

[24] Dennis Sullivan, *Interview with LTC Dennis Sullivan*, edited by Operational Leadership Experiences Project (FT Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 26 June 2006), http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/p4013coll13&CISOPTR=446&CISOBOX=1&REC=12 (accessed 3 November 2010), 7. COL Sullivan served as the battalion executive officer of 1-87 IN, 1/10 BCT, in Regional Command-East, in Afghanistan from JUL 2003-APR 2004.

One of the milestones that a BCT must pass on the way to Afghanistan is the Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE) at one of the Army's Combat Training Centers. Since 2004, the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), the National Training Center (NTC) and the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) have updated their traditional ROMO-based training scenarios to reflect more of a counterinsurgent menu of training tasks for the various types of BCTs in the Army inventory. Planners among the CTC's, Forces Command (FORSCOM), Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), and the effected Divisions and Brigades, routinely put forth superlative effort to ensure that as many of the normally deployed slice of enabling Soldiers (those with special skills not normally within an IBCT organization) are attending the MRE with the preparing BCT. Based upon communication with the existing unit in theater, the templated replacement Battalion and Brigade will task organize to train at the CTC for two weeks in a simulated environment that attempts to mirror the theater to which they will deploy.[25] Are these two weeks of training enough to hone Standard Operating Procedures and Contingency Operations with such a non-doctrinal task organization?

From a macro view, the current method of BCT employment in the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) environment involves 90-120-Soldier elements operating out of small, semi-self-contained Forward Operating Bases (FOB) dispersed about a battalion-sized Area of Operations (AO), which may encompass an entire province within Afghanistan. These Soldiers may operate with elements of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and may have a COIN-centric mission set, but are still tied to the large (proportionally) base, and the tertiary demands such responsibility places upon a Company Commander.[26] These demands include force protection, logistical functions, command and control, and training, all of which consume two of the most valuable resources in

[25] Dennis Sullivan, *Interview with LTC Dennis Sullivan*. 3–4

[26] U.S. Department of Defense, "DoD News Briefing with Colonel John P. Johnson from Afghanistan at the Pentagon Briefing Room, Arlington, VA," (Department of Defense Webpage: 21 November 2008), http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4321 (accessed 14 July 2010), 2.

a COIN fight – time, and Soldiers. Initial explorations into contemporary case studies and unit-level After Action Reviews (AARs), and my own recent combat experience in Afghanistan, indicate that contemporary conventional elements are having varied levels of success in the conduct of COIN campaigns, but it is not uniform. Task organizations vary at all echelons, but so do the specific operational environments of each unit.[27]

## B. A CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLE

For the researcher to place historical COIN forces in perspective, an analysis of a modern model of a COIN force is required. Key to the argument is the difference between the doctrinally organized formation and the mission-oriented organization that evolved after several months in the combat theater. Figure 3 represents the doctrinal organization of a Light, Airborne, or Air Assault Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target Acquisition (RSTA) Squadron. The MTOE supports this organization with personnel, vehicles, weapons, and equipment, while the doctrine drives the training budgetary constraints, both in time, and money. Note the two motorized reconnaissance troops, one dismounted reconnaissance troop, the headquarters and headquarters troop, and the forward support troop. With a squadron headquarters, three maneuver troop headquarters, six mounted platoons, and two dismounted platoons, an RSTA can accomplish the following tactical goals on a mobile battlefield. Within the complex, dynamic conditions and threat profiles of future OEs, the squadron is essential to successful Army and joint operations in several ways:

- It provides a significant dismounted or mounted reconnaissance force.
- It enables the higher commander to decisively employ his maneuver battalions and joint fires and to choose times and places for engagement to his advantage.

[27] TF Currahee, *Afghan Commander AAR Book*, Currahee Edition, (West Point, N.Y.: U.S. Army Center for Company-level Leaders, 2009), https://call2.army.mil/docs/doc5803/CURRAHEE.pdf (accessed 29 December 2009), 27-30, 37.

- It maximizes security of the higher headquarters by providing timely, accurate, and relevant combat information.

- It helps the higher commander achieve advantages over an enemy or adversary in terms of the ability to collect, process, and disseminate information.[28]

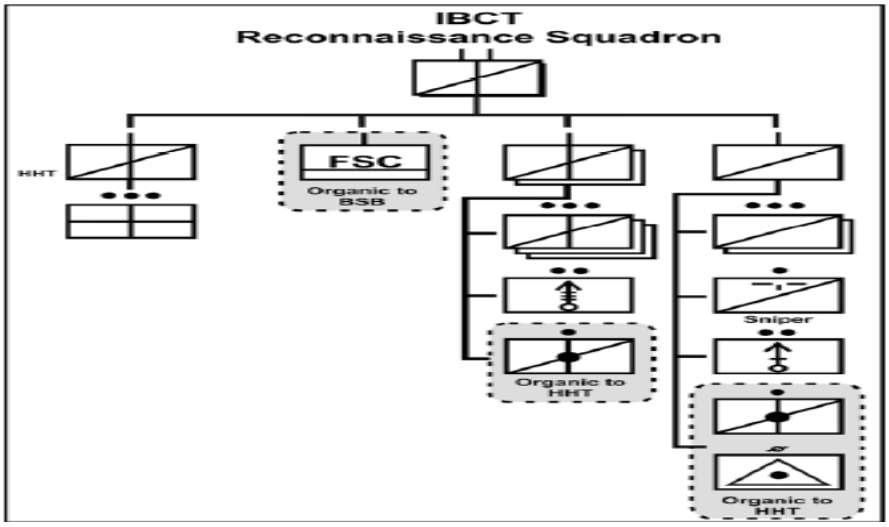


**Figure 2. Doctrinal IBCT RSTA Squadron Organization[29]**

Figure 3 displays an example of the heavily fragmented, but equally heavily augmented, RSTA Squadron in a COIN environment. The 1-61 Cavalry Squadron, a subordinate element of the 4/101 BCT (AASLT), fought in the Paktya province of Afghanistan from February 2008 to March of 2009. The unit was reorganized into six distinct subcommands in order to control four Combat Outposts and one Forward Operating Base (one Platoon team is detached to an adjacent battalion). This unit did not fight screening actions in support of the larger BCT, but sustained a COIN-oriented mission set within a population-centric approach. Rather than executing an offensive or defensive operational

[28] Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-20.96 (Reconnaissance and Cavalry Squadron)*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2010, https://armypubs.us.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_c/pdf/fm3_20x96.pdf (accessed 11 November 2010), 1–1.

[29] Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-20.96 (Reconnaissance and Cavalry Squadron)*, 1–8**.**

set across a linear battlespace, the Squadron was stationary and widely dispersed across the entire province. Note the creation of a third platoon within the dismounted reconnaissance troop, and the creation of a combat platoon within the Squadron Headquarters section. To support the large logistical footprint, the Forward Support Troop subdivided, and pushed its special skills soldiers forward. Note also the augmentation to the Squadron Task Force: Military Police, Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, additional mortars and snipers, ANSF training and liaison teams, tactical PSYOP personnel, and additional military intelligence assets.

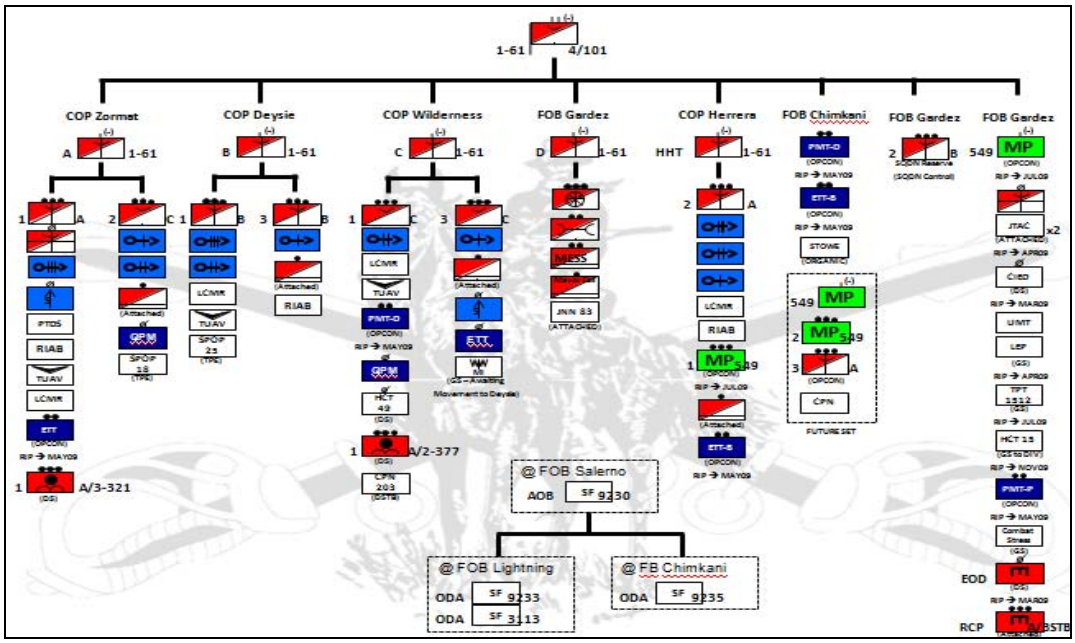


**Figure 3. IBCT RSTA Squadron in a COIN Environment[30]**

The organizational line chart in Figure 3 represents one contemporary squadron's evolution, while in theater. The researcher would ask, how much more effective could this organization have been, had this task organization been in effect during the home station training, prior to the deployment?

30 Eric Sauer, Jeremy Peifer, and Oleksandr Tkachuk, "1-61 CAV Squadron in the Battle for the KG Pass (Jun–Aug 2008)." Paper read at Organizational Design for Special Operations class, Naval Postgraduate School, 10 December 2009.

A concise, historical analysis of prior international COIN forces, used as a basis for determining situational appropriate force packages in a COIN environment would be value added to the Brigade Combat Team- and Battalion Task Force-echelon commanders and staffs. There is no common metric to determine the force required for a specific operational environment in Afghanistan; logic would dictate that the disposition, composition, and strength of the enemy forces would serve as a factor in this decision, but how does this apply to an enemy element that does not wear a uniform? How does a commander determine the extent, or the potentiality of, an insurgency, and then subsequently assign his forces to attain his intended outcomes?

## C. A THEORETICAL WAY AHEAD

As noted in John Nagl's argument in *Joint Forces Quarterly*, the American military institution remains focused on high intensity war. The Vietnam conflict was regarded as an abnormality, and the "American Way of War" was reaffirmed in the 1991 Gulf War with Iraq.[31] The very culture of the American military is oriented on this model of attrition-based warfare, versus relational-maneuver style warfare, as described by Edward Luttwak.[32] He goes on to argue that if such an attrition-based armed force (the U.S. Army, as an example), should engage in a low-intensity conflict, the best option for that force, and for the nation, is to design a force more capable of dealing with an amorphous environment. Luttwak's solution is contentious: combining the existing Special Forces organizations with a derivative of light infantry in Divisional strength, with the hybrid infantry formations fulfilling a supporting role to the Special Forces. In

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[31] John Nagl, "Let's Win the Wars We're In," 22.

[32] Edward N. Luttwak, "Notes on Low-Intensity Conflict," 341. Luttwak differentiates the two characteristics of forces as internal versus external focused in their view on the operating environment, and caveats his argument with a statement that all forces fall on a line between the two extremes. The closer a particular force falls toward being pure attrition, the more they focus on internal administrations and operations; warfare becomes a function of "administering superior material resources" against an enemy in a mechanistic fashion. The closer a particular force falls toward being pure relational-maneuver, the more that force becomes outward regarding. This force identifies the weakness of the opponent, and reconfigures itself to capitalize on these weaknesses and achieve victory.

speaking to the contemporary COIN struggle the United States faces, and to the echoes of Army reconstruction post-Vietnam, John Nagl remarks, “For these reasons, the security of the Nation and its interests demand that the army continue to learn and adapt to counterinsurgency and irregular warfare and that it institutionalize these adaptations so they are not forgotten again.”[33]

Generals Petraeus and Amos discuss the learning nature of historically successful COIN forces in the opening chapter of FM 23-4, and list a series of characteristics of these organizations. The Marine Corps command in the I Corps AOR in Vietnam, 1965, exhibited a number of these traits, which led to the creation of the CAP platoons that enjoyed much success. Such learning and evolving organizations typically have:

- Developed COIN doctrine and practices locally
- Established local training centers during COIN operations
- Regularly challenged their assumptions, both formally and informally.
- Learned about the broader world outside the military and requested outside assistance in understanding foreign political, cultural, social, and other situations beyond their experience
- Promoted suggestions from the field
- Fostered open communications between senior officers and their subordinates
- Established rapid avenues of disseminating lessons learned
- Coordinated closely with governmental and nongovernmental partners at all command levels
- Proved open to soliciting and evaluating advice from the local people in the conflict zone.[34]

While case studies and AARs of the contemporary fight show that U.S. Army BCT’s have further decentralized their structure upon arriving in theater,

[33] John Nagl, “Let’s Win the Wars We’re In,” 21.

[34] David H. Petraeus and James F. Amos, *FM 3-24: United States Army and United States Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Kissimmee, FL: Signalman Publishing, 2009), xi.

and sustained success by doing so, can we show a value to designing such forces prior to arriving in theater, and training them as so reorganized?[35] Paul Grant succinctly summarizes the criticality of pre-deployment training, in the contemporary, rotational environment of deployments:

> The purpose of pre-deployment training is to prepare Soldiers to conduct the missions they will execute while deployed. Even though environments and enemies morph over time, pre-deployment training should, at the very least, arm Soldiers with the requisite skills they need to be initially effective and survivable in the operational environment, and thus able to adapt and refine their abilities as the situation develops. If pre-deployment training is inadequate, a unit would arrive to its operational area without the requisite skills and initially be attempting to catch up to enemy forces to match their proficiency. Soldiers would hit the ground at a disadvantage to the enemy, instead of being able to arrive equal, identify, adapt, and surpass. Due to the ever-changing environment, it is completely unrealistic to expect any training plan conducted now to be completely sufficient later for the duration of a deployment.[36]

Grant's comments describe the initial deployments of a number of the forces involved in this study's cases. I take his question further: what if the salient issue of assigning General Purpose conventional forces to a COIN struggle was taken out of the expeditionary model of employment, and a force in being was constructed that was designed, equipped and manned to conduct COIN as a primary mission set, in perpetuity? Such a force, regionally oriented, with stabilized personnel retention, would not incur such an additional training cost upon the nation, as does the annual training of ROMO soldiers to conduct COIN tasks.

In a similar fashion to Luttwak's sliding scale, the answer falls between institutionalizing COIN lessons learned, and creating a specialized branch of the infantry that is COIN-centric and regionally oriented. The subsequent chapters in this document will display a variety of historical models of COIN training, task

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[35] Dennis Sullivan, *Interview with LTC Dennis Sullivan,* 3, 7–8.

[36] Paul M. Grant, "Increasing the Effectiveness of Army Pre-deployment Training." Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2010, 7.

organization and operations. Analysis of these models draws correlations to the Nagl arguments regarding adaptability and flexibility of forces involved in COIN; institutionalizing these mental and physical challenges will be an enduring burden to Army commanders, trainers and logisticians.

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# III. COIN AGAINST COMMUNISTS

> --We believe in the eventual return of sovereign rights and self-government to peoples who have been deprived of them by force
>
> --We believe that all peoples who are prepared for self government should be permitted to choose their own form of government by their own freely expressed choice, without interference from any foreign source. This is true in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, as well as in the Western Hemisphere
>
> --We shall refuse to recognize any government imposed upon any nation by the force of any foreign power.[37]
>
> President Harry S. Truman

## A. VIETNAM AND THE U.S.M.C. COMBINED ACTION PLATOONS

America's conventional military entered the Indochina conflict with cadres of military advisors, drawn from across the ranks of the existing forces. Arriving as a "mere handful" of advisors to control the flow of American military assistance in 1950, the personnel strength grew in 1960 to 300 total Americans,[38] and culminated in a staggering 542,000 uniformed members in 1969.[39] The military ground forces in Vietnam never adopted a counterinsurgency mindset; U.S. Army general officers born of the Jominian philosophies of World War II considered the metric of winning a war was the destruction of the opposing nation-state's military

[37] Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 1988), 148. Originally in a speech President Truman made on 27 October 1945, addressing the post WWII international audience in an homage to the 12 points of President Woodrow Wilson's construct; of the 12, these three seemed directly pointed at Ho Chi Minh's request for U.S protectorate status of Vietnam.

[38] Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, 5.

[39] John Nagl, Learning *to Eat Soup with a Knife*, 173.

forces.[40] Many of these senior leaders were veterans of the Korean conflict from 1948-53, and this experience further solidified the corporate mentality. The Korean experience added the operational model of external foreign support to a Communist-inspired insurgency, through the introduction of conventional invasion forces from a third nation; China shared borders with North Korea and North Vietnam. The U.S. Army had also seen this Communist foreign support model in the Greek Civil War, from 1946-49. The warfighting doctrine, and thusly the organization and equipment, that the U.S. Army took to Vietnam was based on the collective past experiences in World War II, the Greek Civil War, and South Korea.[41] While the U.S. Army Special Forces and CIA had isolated operational COIN success in the Darlac Province with the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) program in 1961-62, there were no conventional Army units specifically oriented on conducting COIN operations.[42]

The U.S. Army organized itself from the company-echelon and higher in order to more efficiently execute jungle-oriented light infantry and air assault operations against the elusive main force battalions of the Viet Cong (VC) and People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN); the United States Marine Corps in the I Corps Tactical Area of Operations (TAOR) chose a different path based on their organizational history of fighting the nation's small wars in the early part of the 20th Century.[43] From 1965-1970, the Marine Corps placed 15 man, NCO-led

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[40] John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, 16–18. Carl von Clausewitz observed Napoleon's mobilization of the entirety of the French nation as a "revolution in military affairs." In the *ancien regime* of European politics and military strategy, war was the sport of kings, fought by professionals; hence, the uniqueness of the Clausewitzian trinity of the people, the government, and the military. Antoine-Henri Jomini, a contemporary, interpreted Napoleon's strategy in a different light, emphasizing strategy, invariable scientific principles, and "offensive action to mass forces against a weaker enemy at some decisive point" in order to gain victory. Jomini's tangible and quantifiable mentality and fixation on the offensive is often confused with von Clausewitz' theorems of situational analysis and the succinctness of Jomini's metrics have been more palatable to the American Army than the Clausewitzian, "it depends," answer.

[41] Larry E. Cable, *Conflict of Myths*, 3.

[42] Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, 70-71.

[43] John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, 178. The standard infantry battalion in the Army inventory was increased by one rifle company and one heavy weapons company; the intent was to "devise a light, mobile organization that could fight these small engagements all over the country."

squads in the small villages in the TAOR. These Marines, in partnership with local Popular Forces (PF), Revolutionary Development (RD) forces, National and Local Police, and local governance, formed Combined Action Program (CAP) platoons, and focused on the physical security of the agrarian, largely rural populations.[44] Though specially selected, and moderately trained in-theater, these conventional Marine elements conducted population-centric COIN with historically viable results. Compared to the then-contemporary search-and-destroy operations utilized by other conventional elements, the CAP platoons were an economical investment, relative to risk, national treasure, and blood.[45]

The Marine CAP concept was evolutionary in nature; none of the assigned personnel trained as a unit in this capacity outside of the Vietnam Theater. At its inception, MAJ Cullen Zimmermann, the battalion executive officer of 3rd of the 4th Marines, hand selected the initial four rifle squads from across the breadth of the battalion. As the program grew, I Corps established a two-week school that instructed selectees in Vietnamese language and culture, military-civil operations, and tactics. The selectees had to be volunteers for the program, have a commander's recommendation, have at least two months in country, and at least six months remaining on their tours. The quality of the program was not a function of the quality of the training, but that of the individuals selected to participate. As the program matured, the leadership found it increasingly difficult to populate the CAP platoons; line infantry commanders in the parent units were reluctant to give up their best officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, and there was no additional Marine forces authorized to back-fill the CAP selectees. Consequent to this decrease in quality among selectees after 1968, performance began to drop within the program.[46]

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[44] Peter Brush, "Civic Action: The Marine Corps Experience in Vietnam, Part I," 2.

[45] F. J. (Bing) West, *The Village*, 50.

[46] Keith F. Kopets, "The Combined Action Program: Vietnam," *Small Wars Journal,* http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/kopets.htm (accessed 30 November 2010), 1–2; Peter Brush, "Civic Action: The Marine Corps Experience in Vietnam, Part I," 2–3.

Using the RAND “Victory Has 1000 Fathers” series of metrics as noted in Chapter I, I have marked trends and tendencies of the U.S.M.C CAP platoons, insofar as observations within the literature of their actions. Table 5 describes these results with a simple “Y” (yes) or “N” (no) annotation; in mixed result findings, the reader will find a “Y/N”. Annotations of “N/A” indicated either an insufficiency of data either for or against exhibition of a certain COIN practice, or a subjective assessment by the researcher placing the practice in some manner outside of the abilities and scope of the CAP platoons.

| U.S.M.C CAP Platoons in Vietnam | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 15 Good COIN Practices | | 12 Bad COIN Practices | |
| N/A | • The COIN force adhered to several strategic communication principles. | • The COIN force used both collective punishment and escalating repression. | N/A |
| Y | • The COIN force significantly reduced tangible insurgent support. | • The primary COIN force was an external occupier. | Y |
| Y | • The government established or maintained legitimacy in the area of conflict. | • COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents. | N/A |
| N/A | • The government was at least a partial democracy. | • Militias worked at cross-purposes with the COIN force or government. | N |
| Y | • COIN force intelligence was adequate to support effective engagement or disruption of insurgents. | • The COIN force resettled or removed civilian populations for population control. | N/A |
| N | • The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas. | • COIN force collateral damage was perceived by the population in the area of conflict as worse than the insurgents'. | N/A |
| Y | • The government/state was competent. | • In the area of conflict, the COIN force was perceived as worse than the insurgents. | N/A |
| Y | • The COIN force avoided excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force. | • The COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics. | N/A |
| Y | • The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict. | • The COIN force engaged in more coercion or intimidation than the insurgents. | N/A |
| N/A | • Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict controlled or claimed by the COIN force. | • The insurgent force was individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated. | Y/N |
| Y | • The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported or favored the COIN force. | • The COIN force or its allies relied on looting for sustainment. | N/A |
| Y | • The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas. | • The COIN force and government had different goals or levels of commitment. | Y/N |
| Y | • The COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance. | | |
| Y | • The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas that it controlled or claimed to control. | | |
| Y | • The perception of security was created or maintained among the population in areas that the COIN force claimed to control. | | |

Table 3. Tabular Results of U.S.M.C CAP Platoons in Vietnam

The U.S.M.C. CAP platoons were highly effective in executing "good" COIN practices. Executing strategic communications was not within their purview at the village level; one example of the scope of a platoon's area of

operations was five square miles, and a population of 5,000.[47] The platoons discussed in the literature were quite successful at disrupting the tangible insurgent support; they were able to kill, capture, or otherwise disrupt Vietcong tax collectors, and were able to interdict food shipments of rice and fish to the Vietcong and PAVN formations outside of their AO.[48] The central government of South Vietnam did attempt to maintain legitimacy throughout the I Corps AOR; the Revolutionary Development council, as well as the RD soldiers, interacted with the villages and the CAP elements, working on both point defense missions, and agricultural development projects. Some isolated frictions developed between the Popular Forces (recruited from the local area) and the RD forces, recruited from the urbanized, southern areas of SVN; this affected the CAP only at a tactical level.[49]

The governance of Vietnam during the period of 1965-70 was a shifting set of military autocracies that under the advisement of American forces, partially espoused democratic principles. Tactical levels of intelligence increased as the Marines developed deeper relations with the affected village population; this was compounded by the trust and interdependency of the combined team, namely the Popular Forces, and the local police officers.[50] This intelligence network was crucial to the success of the Marines' COIN mission, as well as their survival; in two incidents in the Bihn Nghia village, the VC and NVA massed into conventional formations, and attempted to obliterate the Marines at Fort Page. The first attempt, a 140-man combined force, was repulsed at the cost of five Americans KIA and six PF, KIA.[51] A larger NVA and VC force attempted, months

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[47] F. J. (Bing) West, *The Village*, 176.

[48] F. J. (Bing) West, *The Village*, 306; Peter Brush, "Civic Action: The Marine Corps Experience in Vietnam, Part I," 4; Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, 174.

[49] F. J. (Bing) West, *The Village*, 105; Keith F. Kopets, "The Combined Action Program: Vietnam," 3; John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, 123.

[50] Keith F. Kopets, "The Combined Action Program: Vietnam," 2; F. J. (Bing) West, *The Village*, 136.

[51] Peter Brush, "Civic Action: The Marine Corps Experience in Vietnam, Part I," 3; Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 305–07.

later, to repeat the assault, but a single Marine rifle shot repulsed them; the Marines and PF received information from the villagers that the assault was coming, and the shot was a costly signal to the combined enemy force, communicating the solidarity and readiness of the village.[52] The local village government was competent about answering to the populace's demands, and was tightly nested with the CAP Platoon in policy and actions, such as enforcing curfews, and managing the schools system.[53] The Marines were stringent about controlling collateral damage, and they maintained a tight control as to whom of the military, either American, South Vietnamese, or Allied, conducted operations in their villages. In the example of Bihn Nghia , no aircraft were allowed to fire within 5 kilometers of the town, and all supporting artillery charts within the area had the zone marked as a "No Fire Area".[54] The low body counts reported by the CAP platoons earned the ire of GEN Westmoreland, but control of lethal effects made them more effective as protectors of the populace.[55]

The platoons lived in the villages, consuming their daily meals as guests, and interacting with the local government and the populace; while they were not able to offer Commander's Emergency Relief Funds (CERP) for short-term development projects, they lent their labor to the agrarian-oriented, economic base. Particularly in the village of Bihn Nghia, the population supported the Marines and the Popular Forces, favoring them over the Vietcong.[56] Writ large, the I Corps CAP program expanded from an isolated Joint Action detachment in August 1965 in Phu Bai, to a peak of 114 platoons spread over the five provinces within I Corps AOR. Though not inter-connected or mutually supporting as in the

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[52] F. J. (Bing) West, *The Village*, 331–333.

[53] F. J. (Bing) West, *The Village*, 143, 158–160.

[54] Peter Brush, "Civic Action: The Marine Corps Experience in Vietnam, Part I," 4–5; Keith F. Kopets, "The Combined Action Program: Vietnam," 4; John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, 157; Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, 308.

[55] Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, 175.

[56] F. J. (Bing) West, *The Village*, 134, 239, 293; Keith F. Kopets, "The Combined Action Program: Vietnam," 2.

"oil spot" model of counterinsurgency,[57] through the five-year period of operations, the CAP platoons secured 800 villages, and an estimated 500,000 civilians.[58] The COIN force worked in an environment of uncontested air dominance; the helicopter enabled resupply, transportation, and medical evacuation, as well as aerial interdiction and close air support. The evacuation aspect was critical to the isolated American forces; evacuation of Marines, PFs, governance, and civilians was a crucial benefit that the Americans brought to the Civil Action Program, and a key action-based strategic communication of commitment to the supported villages.[59] The Marines ensured the basic services of the local school system and intermediate medical care continued despite enemy activity. With these civic effects, and the security brought by the combined team, the populace had a strong perception of security within the areas the CAPs operated in.[60]

The results of my research indicates the Marines in the CAP platoons conducted fewer of the "bad" COIN practices. While many of the "bad" practices occurred throughout the MAC-V Theater, executed by other members of the uniformed services, the CAP platoons avoided some of the most controversial practices. They did not use collective punishment or escalating repression, and their actions brought no new grievances against themselves or the governance, as claimed by the VC propaganda machines. As American forces, they were seen by villagers as an external occupier initially, but came to be regarded more as guests and members of the villages, as time progressed. Collectively, the Marines minimized collateral damage, preferring close maneuver, stealth, night patrols, and small arms fire to maintain security in their AOs.[61] In the I Corps AOR, there was little utilization of the population relocation technique; the

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[57] Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, 70.

[58] Keith F. Kopets, "The Combined Action Program: Vietnam," 4.

[59] F. J. (Bing) West, *The Village*, 117, 315–317.

[60] F. J. (Bing) West, *The Village*, 50, 174-176; Peter Brush, "Civic Action: The Marine Corps Experience in Vietnam, Part I," 4; Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, 307.

[61] Keith F. Kopets, "The Combined Action Program: Vietnam," 2–3.

Strategic Hamlet program foundered at its inception in 1962-63, and a wide-scale reengagement of the concept was never attempted.[62] A key "no" answer that could be interpreted in a different light is the question of militias working at cross-purposes to the COIN force and the governance. In Bihn Nghia, the combined CAP platoon was so tightly integrated that the Popular Force commander, with the Marines as subordinate elements, often led missions. While this in itself may go against the existing policies of the day, it did prove a dangerous situation when the rural PF would quarrel with the urban RD forces, who were dispatched from the central government in Saigon. This unified manner of command, despite the frictions, may indicate a metric of success in the Marines' training and development of the PF, pursuant to their standard operating procedures instilled in 1967.[63]

As the CAP program increased in size and scope, the initial highly trained and specially selected volunteers from the Infantry battalions gave way to other Marines from various service and service support echelons; from 1968-70, CAP tactical performance and professionalism in the field decreased as the quality recruits rotated home.[64] The last negative response is a general comment discussed earlier insofar the relationship between the central governance in Saigon and the COIN force; represented by the RD forces, the central government had different goals and ideals than the local government. The Marines allied themselves strongly to the ideals of the local governance, and were consequently critical of the Saigon government, and the efforts of the RDs in Bihn Nghia.[65]

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[62] Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam*, 82–83.

[63] F. J. (Bing) West, *The Village*, 170; Keith F. Kopets, "The Combined Action Program: Vietnam," 2–3. Kopets describes the July 1967 efforts of one U.S.M.C LTC Corson, placed in charge of the I Corps program by LTG Walt. He composed SOPs to go along with the six mission sets he identified for the CAPs as the program matured. The mission sets were: Destroy the communist infrastructure within the platoons area of responsibility; Protect public security, help maintain law and order; Organize local intelligence nets; Participate in civic action and conduct propaganda against Communists; Motivate and instill pride, patriotism, and aggressiveness in the militia, and; Conduct training for all members of the combined-action platoon in general military subjects, leadership, and language, and increase the proficiency of the militia platoon so it could function effectively without the Marines.

[64] Keith F. Kopets, "The Combined Action Program: Vietnam," 3.

[65] F. J. (Bing) West, *The Village*, 103–105.

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# IV. COIN AGAINST ISLAMISTS

> They had the taste for liberty, the sense of justice and the instinct for generosity. They wanted to create a multiracial, free, fraternal and prosperous society, to set an example for a world divided between rich and poor peoples. One word symbolized their ambition: "integration"! Opposite under the striking red and green banner of Islam, the enemy preached racial hatred and religious fanaticism, the arbitrary terrorism of a one-party dictatorship…to win the hearts of the population, they turned themselves into medical orderlies, administrators, water irrigation project managers, overseers of the rural economy… To protect them, they also became policemen, judges, and executioners.[66]
>
> Jean Pouget,
> Veteran of Indochina and Algeria

## A. ALGERIA AND THE FRENCH AIRBORNE

The Algerian War, fought from 1954 to 1962, was one of the critical decolonization wars to follow World War II. Major antagonists were French federated forces, and a number of Algerian militant independence movements; this war was fought nearly concurrently with French decolonization efforts in French Indochina (Vietnam), and severely disrupted the national characteristics and values systems of both North Africa and Metropolitan (European) France. The National Liberation Front (FLN) initiated the conflict on 1 November 1954 by perpetrating nationwide acts of violence against European settlers, and pro-French Muslim civilians; this was the so-called "All-Saints Day Massacre." The French colonial forces initiated a massive series of repercussive actions that would set the stage for ever-increasing cycles of heedless violence and excessive bloodletting, practiced routinely by either side of the COIN fight. The French forces, among them the 10th Airborne, the celebrated group of

66 Martin S. Alexander, Martin Evans, and J.F.V. Keiger, "The 'War Without a Name", the French Army and the Algerians: Recovering Experiences, Images, and Testimonies," in Alexander, Martin S., Martin Evans, and J.F.V. Keiger (eds.), *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 1.

paratroopers responsible for the successful, but bloody, Battle of Algiers in 1956-57, never succeeded in reducing the tangible support for the insurgency, especially among the urban Muslim population from which the FLN drew its ranks. Algeria remains a prime example of the cumulative effect of long duration, low-intensity conflict upon a democratically based government. While the military efforts of the various branches of the French military succeeded in achieving tactical and operational victory at nearly every turn, Algeria was lost to France by growing public antipathy to the war, and international outcries against perceived French excesses of violence and use of torture. The FLN and other revolutionary movements within Algeria effectively turned a military struggle into a political struggle, and nearly destroyed France on their way toward independence.[67]

Using the RAND "Victory Has 1000 Fathers" series of metrics as noted in Chapter I, I have marked the trends and tactics of the French Airborne troops, insofar as observations within the literature of their actions. Some aspects of the RAND metrics are of a scope larger than a tactical or operational unit of organization; in these cases, I refer to historical observations of French national policy, or the policies of the military governorship of Algeria. Table 4 describes these results with a simple "Y" (yes) or "N" (no) annotation; in mixed result findings, the reader will find a "Y/N". Annotations of "N/A" indicated either an insufficiency of data either for or against exhibition of a certain "Good" or "Bad" COIN practice, or a subjective assessment by the researcher placing the practice in some manner outside of the abilities of the French Airborne battalions.

[67] Alf A. Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), xi–xiii.

| French Airborne in Algeria | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **15 Good COIN Practices** | | **12 Bad COIN Practices** | |
| Y | • The COIN force adhered to several strategic communication principles. | • The COIN force used both collective punishment and escalating repression. | Y |
| Y/N | • The COIN force significantly reduced tangible insurgent support. | • The primary COIN force was an external occupier. | Y |
| Y | • The government established or maintained legitimacy in the area of conflict. | • COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents. | Y |
| Y | • The government was at least a partial democracy. | • Militias worked at cross-purposes with the COIN force or government. | Y |
| Y | • COIN force intelligence was adequate to support effective engagement or disruption of insurgents. | • The COIN force resettled or removed civilian populations for population control. | Y |
| Y/N | • The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas. | • COIN force collateral damage was perceived by the population in the area of conflict as worse than the insurgents'. | Y/N |
| N | • The government/state was competent. | • In the area of conflict, the COIN force was perceived as worse than the insurgents. | Y |
| N | • The COIN force avoided excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force. | • The COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics. | N/A |
| N | • The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict. | • The COIN force engaged in more coercion or intimidation than the insurgents. | N |
| Y | • Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict controlled or claimed by the COIN force. | • The insurgent force was individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated. | Y/N |
| N | • The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported or favored the COIN force. | • The COIN force or its allies relied on looting for sustainment. | Y |
| N | • The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas. | • The COIN force and government had different goals or levels of commitment. | Y |
| Y | • The COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance. | | |
| N/A | • The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas that it controlled or claimed to control. | | |
| N | • The perception of security was created or maintained among the population in areas that the COIN force claimed to control. | | |

Table 4. Tabular Results of French Airborne in Algeria

Though France lost the Algerian War, the French Airborne battalions did execute a number of the RAND "Good" COIN practices. The government of Algeria, France, and the military forces did execute a number of strategic communications principles. While some attempts were meaningful and some

were meaningless, exercising this COIN practice infers attempting to connect with the host population, which is a net positive. This was manifest in the battle for Algiers in 1956-57, and in tactical leaflet drops and loudspeaker broadcasts within the contested areas of the urban areas of the country. France also had to communicate strategically with the neighboring country of Tunisia, whom was offering sanctuary to members of the FLN.[68] Attempts at social and political reform, and the resultant communiqués describing such efforts, were also considered strategic communications. The Airborne troops, in particular the 10th Airborne Battalion, were the actuaries of executing this French policy.[69]

The data is inconclusive as to whether the efforts of the Airborne reduced tangible insurgent support. In the initial stages of the conflict, the French approached the insurgency with a heavy hand, relying on collective punishment and escalating repression of the host populace.[70] While this may have increased the amount of tangible support for elements of the FLN or ALN, the insurgents themselves conducted atrocities against both the host population of Muslims, and the Europeans, in latter stages of the conflict.[71]

The government of France was a democracy, but Algeria was considered less of a colony, and more a province of France; the official power in Algeria rested in European appointees who were supported by voting and taxpaying European citizens. French policies precluded full rights of citizenship from the

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[68] Nacera Aggoun, "Psychological Propaganda during the Algerian War – Based on a Study of French Army Pamphlets," in Alexander, Martin S., Martin Evans, and J.F.V. Keiger (eds.), *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 193, 196.

[69] Henri Coustaux, "The Algerian War: Personal Account of Colonel Henri Coustaux," translated by Alexander J. Zervoudakis in Alexander, Martin S., Martin Evans, and J.F.V. Keiger (eds.), *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 230.

[70] Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 125–130.

[71] Henri Coustaux, "The Algerian War: Personal Account of Colonel Henri Coustaux," 235.

vast bulk of the Muslim Algerian populace. Without renouncing their subservience to *sharia* law, the Muslims could not attain French citizenship, and the accompanying voting rights.[72]

The French Airborne optimized their intelligence networks as the war progressed, and demonstrated this capacity through the stunning victories over the insurgent cells in the Battle of Algiers.[73] However, a bulk of the operational intelligence gained was through the contentious use of torture; the ALN was able to vilify sufficiently this practice on a global scale, and even earned the French an admonition from America and the United Nations.[74] This practice in itself generated tangible support to the insurgency, and further distanced the Airborne from the Muslim populace of Algeria.

In the initial stages of the conflict, from 1954 -1957, the presence of the French military was sufficient to force the insurgency to fight in small scale, guerrilla-style engagements. As the insurgency grew, and the deprivations and privation enforced by the French military swelled the ranks of the Algerian Muslims, the FLN was able to form company, battalion and regimental size forces. The Soviet, Tunisian, and Egyptian governments aided in the material and logistical aspects of this.[75]

The French national government, and the colonial-style Algerian government, was not competent during the period of the conflict. Domestic political and public pressure removed from power six French prime ministers because of the enduring conflict, and the Fourth Republic, *en toto*, was toppled

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72 Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 35–36, 117–120; Alf A. Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 26–28.

73 Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 198–202.

74 Martin S. Alexander, et al., "The 'War Without a Name," 5-6; Alf A. Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria,* 235–237; Mohammed Khane, "*Le Monde's* Coverage of the Army and Civil Liberties During the Algerian War, 1954-58," in Alexander, Martin S., Martin Evans, and J.F.V. Keiger (eds.), *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 174–192.

75 Henri Coustaux, "The Algerian War: Personal Account of Colonel Henri Coustaux," 236; Jean-Charles Jauffret, "The War Culture of French Combatants in the Algerian Conflict," in Alexander, Martin S., Martin Evans, and J.F.V. Keiger (eds.), *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 101; Jauffret reports a maximum French ground troop strength of 390,000 in 1957.

as a direct correlation to the accumulating public discontent with the prosecution of the war. As the war progressed and neared a close in the early 1960s, Charles De Gaulle and his Fifth Republic was very nearly toppled as the war spread to Metropolitan French territory through Islamic acts of terrorism.[76]

The initial reaction of the French governance and military was to use excessive force in order to crush the rebellion of the FLN and ALN; the inciting incident of the conflict was the All Saints Day Massacre of European settlers in an organized fashion across the breadth of Algeria in 1954. The French revenge for these attacks was sanguine, and largely focused on the Muslim population that was in the immediate areas.[77]

The French Airborne made no decisive attempts to engage the Muslim population in contested areas with targeted information operations (IO) with positive Information Operations (IO). However, they maintained contact with the minority European settlers in the urban areas.[78] Conversely, the French governance did attempt to instill improvements in infrastructure and property reform later in the conflict. By 1957, the situation had so degraded that the little concessions the French offered were unable to win popular support of the Muslim majority. No amount of positive IO could, as a singular effort, stem the tide of religious and nationalistic insurgency.[79]

The Muslim population in Algeria began to see the French Airborne, in particular the 10th Battalion, as foreign occupiers; the European minority was in favor of them, but was unable to influence the insurgency's tangible support networks. The heavy hand of the French Army and the 10th Airborne would fall upon the disaffected urban Muslim population of Algiers in 1956-57, and would

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76 Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 12, 112–13, 189–90.

77 Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 12, 90–94, 121–123; Alf A. Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria,* 154–55. The French formations, under orders of the government, executed members of the ALN and FLN, provoking further cycles of violence originating in the Muslim population majority.

78 Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 115, 198–201.

79 Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 154–57; Henri Coustaux, "The Algerian War: Personal Account of Colonel Henri Coustaux," 230.

magnify the people's distance from the French colonial forces. French practices of collective punishment and repression further alienated them from the Muslim population.[80]

During most of the conflict, French Airborne forces were used in a mobile pursuit model against elements of the ALN, while other French formations of mechanized, armored, and conventional infantry were used to secure areas within their Areas of Responsibility (AORs). In this, the French did not establish, expand or sustain secured areas, with the exception of the Battle of Algiers.[81] The French effort largely depended upon uncontested air domination, both in the use of organic fixed wing and rotary wing assets as aerial weapons platforms, and to enable troop movement and vertical envelopments of FLN enclaves. This air domination was key to the 10th Airborne's successful battle for Algiers, where helicopters were used both tactically, and in a Psychological Operations (PSYOP) perspective, having been equipped with loudspeakers.[82]

Subsequent research determined that the French Airborne did not make efforts to ensure basic services remained in contested areas. Within an operational context, the Airborne (and other French Forces, either metropolitan, Muslim, or Foreign Legion) would clear a series of villages, and move on to the next intelligence-driven hotspot, without maintaining an enduring presence to ensure the insurgents were denied tangible support.[83] Lastly, the French failed

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[80] Henri Coustaux, "The Algerian War: Personal Account of Colonel Henri Coustaux," 230-32; Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 168–72; Alf A. Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria,* 158–160.

[81] Alf A. Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria,* 233–38; Irwin M Wall. *France, the United States, and the Algerian War* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 36–38; Hugh Roberts, "The Image of the French Army in the Cinematic Representation of the Algerian War: the Revolutionary Politics of *The Battle of Algiers*," in Alexander, Martin S., Martin Evans, and J.F.V. Keiger (eds.), *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 154–55.

[82] Irwin M. Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War*, 107; Nacera Aggoun, "Psychological Propaganda during the Algerian War," 198.

[83] Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 115, 198-201; Alf A. Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria,*134–36. An interesting insight from Heggoy is that "…the colonial system was at the root of the problem. As the French fumbled along through 1954 and 1955, and as the uniformed men of the National Liberation Army circulated…with apparent impunity…resolve grew firmer from day to day."

to convince the Algerian populace that they were securing the areas they sporadically occupied. The FLN and ALN were able to conduct acts of reprisal and terror against the host population, seemingly at will, in response to perceived or actual collaboration with the French forces, or colonial governance.[84]

In quantifying the "no" answers to the "Good Practices in COIN" column, the researcher has provided justification for a number of the "yes" answers on the "Bad Practices in COIN" column; while not a perfect zero-sum game of assessment, a number of the listed practices are directly antithetical to each other. As discussed earlier, the French Airborne, in keeping with national policy, made use of collective punishment and escalating repression; this hastened the populace's perceptual transition of them from colonial constabulary forces, to foreign occupiers, which was a direct indicator of the rise of nationalistic sentiment as the years of conflict continued. The FLN and ALN were quick to capitalize upon the French intransigence of violence, and disseminated propaganda magnifying the excesses to inflame further the Muslim religious sensibilities, and Algerian nationalistic sentiment.[85]

The research does not indicate militias working at cross-purposes to the COIN force specifically. However, a number of differing castes of French soldiers, such as Regulars, Conscripts, Foreign Legion, Muslim, and a wide variety of paramilitary organizations, fought the Algerian War. War weariness among the conscripts and the Regulars, many of whom were veterans of the French Indochina War, had a degenerative effect on mission accomplishment and discipline; the Legion and the Muslim Battalions suffered from high desertion rates and occasional mutinies as the war progressed.[86]

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84 Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 135–36; Martin S. Alexander,et.al., "The 'War Without a Name," 9–11.

85 Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 88–92, 102, 124–5, 183–8.

86 Martin S. Alexander,et.al., "The 'War Without a Name," 26–27; Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 150–51; Zervoudakis, Alexander J., "From Indochina to Algeria: Counter-insurgency Lessons," in Alexander, Martin S., Martin Evans, and J.F.V. Keiger (eds.), *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 44.

One French effort during the war was to relocate targeted populations, or attempt to isolate and contain populations among racial and religious lines, especially in the coastal urban areas. The 10th Airborne was reasonably successful at this practice during the Battle of Algiers, though these isolated Muslim sectors became a source of tangible support for the FLN and other revolutionary groups within the city. In isolating and concentrating the Muslim population in this fashion, French efforts to use force nearly always resulted in collateral damage, a situation that the insurgents were quick to exaggerate and publicize. The population in the contested areas thusly perceived the COIN force's use of excessive force as worse than that of the insurgents.[87]

As commented upon earlier, the French federated forces varied in composition, motivation, ethnicity, and professional status. Both sides of the conflict conducted atrocities against the civilian populations, European or Muslim; as it is now, this tactic was regarded as unprofessional, even when sanctioned by higher command or policy. Among the French Airborne forces, discipline was maintained by *esprit de corps* and firm leadership; among the conscript formations of conventional infantry, village clearance missions occasioned to devolve into looting and non-judicial executions, incidents of which increased in frequency as the war dragged along and victory for the French seemed elusive.[88] While looting for pleasure and looting for sustenance are not empirically the

[87] Irwin M. Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War*, 68–69; Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 121–23. Horne, in particular, discusses the French reciprocity following the FLN massacre of French nationals at Philippeville, 20 August 1954. The European and pro-French casualties killed by FLN-inspired mob action numbered 123; in the reprisals, the French 18th Regiment (Airborne) reported killing 1,273 insurgents. The FLN, citing names and addresses, placed the actual Muslim body count as high as 12,000. An observer, returning to Philippeville in September 1954, noted "one could not imagine anything more lugubrious than the atmosphere prevailing in Philippeville. It was a season of storms, and sombre clouds filled the sky. The streets were almost deserted, with the exception of armed patrols. The Europeans saw terrorists in every Muslim, the Muslims feared reprisal by the Europeans…"

[88] Jean-Charles Jauffret, "The War Culture of French Combatants in the Algerian Conflict," in Alexander, Martin S., Martin Evans, and J.F.V. Keiger (eds.), *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 108–10.

same, the Muslim population interpreted the actions in the same light, contributing to the final "bad" COIN practice relative to the RAND study.[89]

The research indicates that the French military effort attained seven of twelve "Good" COIN practices as a "Yes" answer, while achieving eight of twelve "Bad" COIN practices with a similar "Yes" answer. As noted earlier, the two sides of the table are nearly inverse conditions of their opposing listing, but not perfectly. Crucial aspects of the "Good" practices with documented "No" answers are key: the force could not control the insurgents tangible support networks, could not gain popular support of either the European minority or Muslim majority, and failed to hold and expand secured areas within the contested zones. When the researcher examines the individual unit practices of the professional Airborne forces in the COIN structure, the data is slightly contaminated by the totality of the French military and political efforts. The 10th Airborne used excessive force, torture, and severe population control measures to dominate the Battle of Algiers, but attempted to marry positive IO, development, and social reform efforts to their kinetic efforts during and post-conflict. This may have been more a function of individual initiative by the tactical commanders, versus an ingrained or institutionalized Technique, Tactic or Procedure (TTP).[90] This was a result of the manner in which the French Regular Army forces were trained. While the constabulary and regional forces within the colonies were more attuned to civic action, police investigative techniques, and exercising restraint, the expeditionary Regulars and the Foreign Legion were trained, outfitted, organized and resourced in accordance with existing NATO mission sets of European-based linear struggles against their Warsaw Pact enemies.[91]

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89 Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 171–72.

90 Irwin M. Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War*, 68–69, 254–56; Jean-Charles Jauffret, "The War Culture of French Combatants in the Algerian Conflict," 108–09.

91 Irwin M. Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War*, 60-61, 113; Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace,* 25.

## B. AFGHANISTAN AND THE SOVIET ARMY

In a chilling commentary that nearly describes the British adventures in Afghanistan in the 19th century, Les Grau describes the difficulties facing the Soviet Army during the Afghan War of 1979-1989, and the little-known domestic socio-political effects of the conflict:

> The Armed Forces of the Soviet Union structured, equipped and trained their forces for nuclear and high-intensity war on the great northern European plain and the plains of northern China. However, their political leadership thrust them into the middle of the Afghanistan civil war to reconstitute and support a nominally Marxist-Leninist government. The terrain, the climate and the enemy were entirely different from what they had prepared for. In this locale, their equipment functioned less than optimally, their force structure was clearly inappropriate and their tactics were obviously wrong…returning soldiers were not welcomed as heroes or treated with respect. A gap opened between the Armed Forces and the citizenry and many veterans found they could not fit back into the lifestyle of the complacent and self-centered citizenry. The effects of the Afghanistan war reverberate throughout Russia today.[92]
>
> Lester W. Grau
> Preface to *The Bear Went Over the Mountain*

The contemporary American involvement in the conflict in Afghanistan is merely the latest chapter in the history of a region rife with developmental issues that spans over nearly two centuries of European involvement in the area. The aspiring colonial powers of Great Britain, Germany and Russia nominally influenced the polity of Afghanistan, openly or covertly, through religiously legitimate emirs of various tribal and ethnical persuasions from Kabul. In keeping with the disparate notion of decentralized state power that was historic Afghanistan, the colonial powers also entreated with tributary tribes and princes in the general geographical area that is Afghanistan of the present. While we consider the development of the modern nation state as a function of both inter-

[92] Lester W. Grau, *The Bear Went Over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan* (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998), xvii.

and intra-nation conflict, the lack of stability, unity, and strength of the Afghan nation poses a conundrum to one unfamiliar with its historic past of disunity. Charles Tilly makes the comment, relative to European nations, that "States make War, and War Makes States," but this transitional mechanism has not occurred in Afghanistan, despite that Afghanistan has been a scene of nearly constant conflict over the last 30 years.[93]

Afghanistan has had a history of intense tribal and ethnic fault lines, and is bounded by the unique geography of the region. While this loose confederation of social and political groupings has prevented any one foreign power, or domestic central polity, from holding extractive, ideological, or coercive control of the populace, the disparate and nebulous characteristics of the Afghan nation-state is one of the key facets of its failed nature. Through successive expeditionary adventures, the British, Germany, Russia, the USSR, and lately the USA, have failed to solidify the Afghanistan central governance into anything that remotely resembles a European state that exercises control of its populace, territory, economy, and borders, while retaining the legitimate use of force.

Understanding the Afghanistan environment requires an in-depth grasp of the regional history, and a thorough understanding of the ethnic and tribal diversity of the country. Through just the last two centuries of foreign intervention, the Afghan collective national memory has developed a justifiably xenophobic attitude towards outside influences, despite remaining highly fiscally dependent upon them.

Attempts at creating either Soviet- or NATO-styled centralized military have proven to be extremely difficult, if not impossible. Neither collectivist nor capitalist economic models have worked; there are not enough natural resources to function as a distributive, *rentier* economy, and the bureaucratic mechanisms of the central governance are not capable of performing extractive taxing of the

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93 B. Taylor and R. Botea, "Tilly Tally: War-Making and State–Making in the Contemporary Third World." *International Studies Review* 10(1) (2008) (27–56), http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.libproxy.nps.edu/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2008.00746.x/full (accessed 22 September, 2010), 29-30.

nascent industrial, agricultural, or personal income tax bases.[94] The aggregate history of tribal and ethnic diversity of Afghanistan, dominated by the Durrani Pashtun, and coupled with the severe geography of the area, is one of the operational and strategic frictions the Soviets had to contend with during their ten-year adventure.[95]

The Communist authoritarian regime, known ultimately as the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, or PDPA, that rose to power in Afghanistan during the Saur Revolution in 1978 did so in an unexpected manner to the Soviets. With their Stalinist flair for violence, the Communist's progressive intentions against the traditional nature of the Pashtun tribal majority and increasing bloodthirstiness in the repression of dissidents and political adversaries, the Soviets were forced to act to protect their investment.[96] By early-to-mid-1979, armed militants and tribal warlords, already identifying themselves as *Mujahedeen* (Islamic holy warriors)[97] dominated 23 of Afghanistan's 28 provinces, and the Stalinist PDPA was facing imminent demise.[98] The Soviet intercession in the affairs of Afghanistan, promulgated

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94 Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History of Its Peoples and Politics* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2002), 5.

95 Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God: With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan* (New York: Vintage, 2001), xix. The channelizing nature of the geography of Afghanistan has severe operational and strategic implications; historically, domination of key passes has either limited or enabled invasion, retreat, expansion, commerce, expeditionary forces, or other actors and agencies, either entering or leaving Afghanistan.

96 Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God,* xviii, 5, 174; Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," 12; David Loyn, *In Afghanistan: Two Hundred Years of British, Russian, and American Occupation* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 139. Loyn observes that some estimates place the casualty count of Afghans killed following the Saur Revolution, but prior to the Soviet invasion, as high as 50,000. Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History,* 188. Ewans asserts, according to a KGB estimate, that during the period of the Saur Revolution, and including the two subsets of Marxists, the *Parcham* and *Klalq*, there were no more than 3000 functionaries and supporters within the Army of Afghanistan and the Communist Parties. With a conservative estimate of 11,000 civilian members, the Communist coup of Afghanistan was truly a surprise dictatorship of the minority that caught the Soviet Communist Party and military completely off balance.

97 David Loyn, *In Afghanistan*, 143; Ali Ahmad Jalali and Lester W. Grau, *The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet-Afghan War* (LaVergne,TN: Books Express Publishing, 2010), 150–51,168. Jalali and Grau discuss how many of the *Mujahedeen* were simply local men, defending their villages, similar in concept to the Afghan *harbakai*, the tribal police or militia who maintained tribal law and order in a particular area.

98 Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," 12.

by both the condition setting for, and the invasion by air and land on 25 December 1979, was as much a strategic expansionist move of the global Communist agenda, as it was an operational move to prevent a perceived imminent failure of the Communist Taraki government. A successful intercession with overwhelming force would prevent the potential loss of face that Cold War international politics would surely deal the Soviets. The Soviets additionally hoped to maintain the legitimacy of their invasion by highlighting a small mutual defense clause in a 1978 treaty, signed with their erstwhile client state.[99]

Using the RAND "Victory Has 1000 Fathers" series of metrics as noted in Chapter I, I have marked trends and tendencies of the Soviet conventional forces as they executed the conflict in Afghanistan. While this is one of the original 30 case studies of the RAND study, I have further augmented their strategic assessments with those of a tactical and operational purview, from a variety of sources. Table 5 describes these results with a simple "Y" (yes) or "N" (no) annotation; in mixed result findings, the reader will find a "Y/N". Annotations of "N/A" indicated either an insufficiency of data either for or against exhibition of a certain "Good" or "Bad" COIN practice, or a subjective assessment by the researcher placing the practice in some manner outside of the abilities of the Soviet Army. For this particular case study, there are a greater number of adjudications that list "Y/N"; the ten years of Soviet involvement, and three distinct phases of the operation, exhibit the Soviet's adaptations to the COIN environment.

[99] Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God*, xv; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History,* 209-10. The Soviets strategic concerns about perception of legitimacy were well founded; on 14 January 1980, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution condemning the invasion by a majority of 104 to 18, with 18 voters absent.

| Soviet Army in Afghanistan | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 15 Good COIN Practices | | 12 Bad COIN Practices | |
| Y | • The COIN force adhered to several strategic communication principles. | • The COIN force used both collective punishment and escalating repression. | Y |
| N | • The COIN force significantly reduced tangible insurgent support. | • The primary COIN force was an external occupier. | Y |
| N | • The government established or maintained legitimacy in the area of conflict. | • COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents. | Y |
| N | • The government was at least a partial democracy. | • Militias worked at cross-purposes with the COIN force or government. | Y |
| N/A | • COIN force intelligence was adequate to support effective engagement or disruption of insurgents. | • The COIN force resettled or removed civilian populations for population control. | Y |
| N | • The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas. | • COIN force collateral damage was perceived by the population in the area of conflict as worse than the insurgents'. | Y |
| N | • The government/state was competent. | • In the area of conflict, the COIN force was perceived as worse than the insurgents. | Y |
| N | • The COIN force avoided excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force. | • The COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics. | Y |
| Y | • The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict. | • The COIN force engaged in more coercion or intimidation than the insurgents. | Y |
| Y/N | • Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict controlled or claimed by the COIN force. | • The insurgent force was individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated. | Y |
| N | • The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported or favored the COIN force. | • The COIN force or its allies relied on looting for sustainment. | Y |
| N/A | • The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas. | • The COIN force and government had different goals or levels of commitment. | Y/N |
| Y/N | • The COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance. | | |
| N | • The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas that it controlled or claimed to control. | | |
| N | • The perception of security was created or maintained among the population in areas that the COIN force claimed to control. | | |

Table 5. Tabular Results of Soviet Army in Afghanistan

In beginning, the analysis of the Soviet Army with their execution of "Good" COIN practices, it is critical to recall that, at alternating periods in time over the course of the conflict, PSYOP elements within the Soviet Army, and the government of the PDRA, attempted to conduct strategic communication with the

populace of Afghanistan. This effort failed for a number of reasons. The PDRA relied on television, radio, and newsprint to communicate ideas, which was nearly ineffectual outside of the urban areas, due to the lack of availability of technology, and a nearly 90% illiteracy rate among the rural peoples. The Soviets attempted to indoctrinate thousands of Afghan youth into the virtues of Communism, either through the existing scholastic systems, or through military officer training in the U.S.S.R. While these were legitimate attempts, actions did not match words, as the Soviet Army continued shelling urban areas claimed by the *Mujahedeen*, and clearing the rural areas of their population.[100]

The Soviets were able to reduce the tangible support of the insurgency at the tactical level, but only by conducting massive population relocations and clearance operations; by 1983, an estimated three million Afghanis were refugees in Pakistan or Iran.[101] As the war progressed through the early-1980s, external support for the insurgency flowed across the Pakistan and Iran borders, from such disparate countries as China, Pakistan, Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, and the United States. These supplies included weaponry, food, medical supplies, communications equipment, and money. Neither the Soviets nor the Afghan Army could stop this flow of material; the magnitude of aid neatly

[100] Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," 15. The populace viewed the evolving Soviet COIN attempts at strategic communication as only an effort to hide their atheistic ruthlessness.

[101] Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," 12; Ali Ahmad Jalali and Lester W. Grau, *The Other Side of the Mountain,* 165–170. One notable example of Soviet failure in the depopulation efforts in the border regions is the Zadran tribes in the Seti Kandow Pass of Paktya; the pass sits astride the only road capable of mechanized transit between Gardez and Khost. In early 1979, the *Mujahedeen*, under command of Mawlawi Jalaluddin Haqani and others, closed both ends of the pass and denied transit to Afghan or Soviet troops; the Pashtun Zadran tribesmen were never molested or forced to flee to Pakistan. The only significant inroads the Soviets made into the Khost-Gardez Pass was Operation Magistral, a 'face saving' final operation the Soviets waged in December 1987. At great cost in blood, but using great guile with false airborne insertions, they opened the pass for transit, and withdrew after 12 days.

mitigated the lack of tangible support the insurgents could not receive from the depopulated border regions.[102]

The PDRA government fought for legitimacy among the rural population since its inception in the wake of the Saur Revolution. By instilling progressive social, economic, and cultural reforms, the government soon found itself branded as un-Islamic by the rural Sunni religious leaders. These offenses centered around secular education and girls schools, conscription issues, land reform programs, and non-judicial imprisonment and execution of tribal elders.[103] A key tenet of the authority of Afghan governments for the preceding 200 years had been the claim of rule in accordance with the Ulema, and the Koran. With the revocation of the support of the Ulema from the Communist PDRA, the Afghan *Mujahedeen* were given a religiously doctrinal justification to rebel against the PDRA, and their Soviet sponsors.[104] As noted earlier, prior to the Soviet invasion, the PDRA lost effective control of all but five of the country's provinces, and never regained control beyond the urban areas, and major transportation hubs.[105]

The lack of religious legitimacy of the PDRA enabled the Pashtun tribes to leverage the most basic of their cultural attributes against the Afghan government, and against the Soviets: *Pashtunwali*, the ancient archetype of tribal honor. The tenets of *badal* (revenge), *melmastia* (hospitality), *nanawatai* (sanctuary) and *nang* (honor) were known for centuries by the British,[106] and

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[102] David Loyn, *In Afghanistan*, 143–44. As early as 1980, President Carter tacitly approved covert aid operations for the Afghan resistance; Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," 12–13.

[103] Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, "Afghan Women on the Margins of the Twenty-first Century," in A. Donini, K. Wesmester & N. Noland (Eds.) *Nation-building Unraveled? Aid, Peace and Justice in Afghanistan*, 95–113 (Bloomfield, Connecticut: Kumarian, 2004), 96–99; Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God*, 115.

[104] Thomas J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010), 226–228; 231. Ulema refers to the collective body of Islamic religious leaders and teachers.

[105] Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," 11–12.

[106] Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God*, 41, 136; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan*, 7.

witnessed from both sides of the Durand line.[107] The absolute adherence to these concepts among the rural Pashtun majority of the country served as one of the building blocks of the modern *mujahedeen* resistance.[108] The modern "Holy Warriors" of Islam were similar to the *ghazis* that so confounded the British empire in the nineteenth century, and were enraged and inflamed by mullahs who saw the Communist PDPA state, backed by the Soviets, as being diametrically opposed to the traditional, tribal manner of life in the Pashtun lands.[109]

The Soviet Army was never large enough to force the *mujahedeen* to fight as guerrillas, for long. At their peak, the Soviets only fielded a maximum of 100,000 ground troop; this was one-fifth the number of troops America had in Vietnam, and Vietnam was one-fifth the size of Afghanistan. This force package of five divisions, four separate brigades, four separate regiments, and sundry support elements comprised the 40th Army, and it attempted to defend 21 provincial centers of government and a few economic and industrial centers. The Soviet and Afghan Armies relinquished control of the vast majority of the countryside without contestation to the insurgency, through simple non-presence.[110]

The PDRA government was not competent, and was barely able to administer anything beyond the borders of Kabul; at the onset of the Soviet invasion, the government was at a point of collapse, and the Afghan Army nearly dissolved before it came to face the full nature of the *Mujahedeen* insurgency. As a method to compensate for these strategic setbacks, the Soviet Army relied on excessive applications of force, with the purpose of crushing the rebellion in

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[107] Lincoln Keiser, *Friend By Day, Enemy By Night: Organized Vengeance in a Kohistani Community* (Mason, OH: Cengage Learning, 2002), 40.

[108] Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God*, 133.

[109] David Loyn, *In Afghanistan,* 73.

[110] David Loyn, *In Afghanistan,* 151-52; Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," 19. As quoted in the RAND study, Anthony Joes remarks, "to achieve the traditional 10-to-1 ratio of troops to guerrillas, the Soviets would have had to put at least 900,000 soldiers in Afghanistan, eight times the size of their actual commitment…," and "…even then there would be no assurance of a speedy solution;" Lester W. Grau, *The Bear Went Over the Mountain,* xii–xiii.

its perceived gestational period. The Soviets subsequently shifted their tactics to targeting the civilian population, intending to deprive the insurgency of tangible support within the rural areas of Afghanistan.[111]

As the war transitioned through 1982-84, the Soviets and PDRA attempted some development and civil action initiatives, attempting to gain the support of the populace. During this period, the Afghan industrial capacity increased by 50%, several textile mills provided jobs and reinvestment capital, and state owned companies exploited natural gas resources. The government, under pointed direction by the Soviets, attempted to recapture the support of the Islamic Ulema by funding the creation of 2,000 mosques, and placing 16,000 Muslim civic and religious leaders on the central governance payroll. Additionally, the Soviets mandated the PDRA revoke the original inciting grievance, the land reformation initiatives instilled by Hafizullah Amin in 1978; by this stage in the war, the damage was nearly irreversible.[112] The vast majority of Afghanistan saw the Soviet soldiers, and their perceived puppets in the PDRA, as atheists, apostates, and communists; while the *Mujahedeen* occasioned to kill other Afghans as a function of internal power struggles, the predominantly Pashtun populace favored the insurgency.[113]

Until 1986, the Soviet Army maintained air superiority over the skies of Afghanistan; the occasional helicopter fell prey to well placed heavy machine gun ambushes, or booby-trapped helicopter landing zones (HLZs), but nothing that prohibited freedom of maneuver.[114] Beginning in 1986, the *Mujahedeen* received steady supplies of American Stinger surface-to-air missiles, which were simple, man portable, and deadly efficient. Within the first year of use, the

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111 Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," 13–14.

112 David Loyn, *In Afghanistan,*144,156; Loyn observes that in placing religious leaders in the urban areas on the PDRA payroll, the governance essentially made it easier for the *Mujahedeen* to publicly target and eliminate this specific caste of visible representatives of the apostates and atheistic Soviets. Thomas J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History,* 230,237.

113 Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," 15–17.

114 Lester W. Grau, *The Bear Went Over the Mountain,* 99-101; Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," 16.

Soviets lost 200 aircraft to the heat seekers, and it dramatically affected the manner in which they synchronized firepower and support for ground forces.[115]

The Soviet Army in executing COIN in Afghanistan was uniform about successfully executing all 12 of the RAND "Bad" COIN practices; I will only draw out the high points in this nearly diametrical comparison to COIN "Good" practices. The Soviet Army and the PDRA conducted collective punishment in the contested areas of Afghanistan; members of the Afghan Army facilitated such actions prior to the Soviet Invasion during the Taraki social purges.[116] In keeping with the Soviet escalation of the war on the *Mujahedeen*, massive population relocations occurred, creating the largest population of refugees in history, and indirectly setting conditions for the rise of the Taliban in the early to mid 1990s.[117] The COIN force collateral damage was viewed as worse in the contested areas than that of the insurgents, and the Soviets actions contributed quite substantially to the existing grievances of the insurgency.[118] Many such events display the Afghan Army also working at a cross purpose to PDRA policies, but in conjunction with the Soviet Army. Largely comprised of conscripts, the Soviets

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115 David Loyn, *In Afghanistan,*155; Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," 15–16.

116 Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God*, 68–69. The social programs initiated in the mid-to-late 1970s, such as land reform, secularization of court systems, and State administered girls school systems set the initial stages for an uprising within the piously traditional Pashtun population in the rural areas. David Loyn, *In Afghanistan,* 144–45. Loyn observes a conservative estimate of the 1980 population of Pul-e-Charki Prison, in the vicinity of Kabul: 150,000 political prisoners of the PDRA, of whom 50,000 were subsequently executed.

117 Thomas J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History,* 255–56. Afghan male refugees taking shelter in the Pakistan tribal regions were enticed by free room and board to attend a number of Deobandi *madrassas* (religious schools); from thence, they became known as *talib* (students), and would return to Afghanistan as the Taliban, conquering Kabul in 1996.

118 Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God,* 223. Kaplan visited Kandahar in 1988, and compared the once sprawling city in the Pashtun tribal heartland to the remnants of a German city at the end of WWII, or the images of Hiroshima following the atomic weapons usage. In a subsequent report (page 120–21), Kaplan discusses the Soviet use of collective punishment and atrocity in an event subsequently investigated by Amnesty International: " On January 16, 1988, after Soviet troops and an Afghan Communist militia unit captured the village of Kalegu in Paktia province from the *Mujahedeen*, they bound together 12 villagers, seven of whom were children, inside the local mosque before they burned it to the ground; nine of the twelve died." David Loyn, *In Afghanistan,*157; Loyn describes the totality of Soviet infrastructure destruction in a figure dated 1988: 1,814 schools, 31 hospitals, and 11 health centers destroyed in the contested zones.

suffered from high desertion rates among their forces; the Afghan Army was particularly prone to desertion. The Afghan Army also contributed tremendous resources to the *Mujahedeen*, and examples exist of entire Afghan battalions defecting, with all men, weapons and equipment, to include tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and supplies.[119]

Some of these resources were less tangible; in the early stages of the war, the unprofessional Afghan troops stole goods and material from the populace on a grand enough scale to further add to the popular disenchantment with the central government. The economically disadvantaged Soviet conscripts were no better, robbing and executing rich Afghanis at checkpoints, and selling weapons and equipment to the highest bidder.[120]

The Taraki government, in attempting to instill land reformation across the breadth of Afghanistan, created the first incident of nationwide state repression in modern history, and served as a direct affront to the authority of the tribal leaders among all ethnicities, but mostly the Pashtuns.[121] The salient point of contestation was the ideological competition between the traditional Islamic conservatism, and the perceived encroachment of the Occidental world, through the Soviet regime. The Soviets, in a political and ideological attempt to prevent a loss of face in the Cold War, committed traditionally trained ROMO conscript armies to what was clearly foreseeable *ex ante* as a long duration, low-intensity COIN struggle.[122]

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[119] David Loyn, *In Afghanistan,* 152; Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History,* 219. Ewans mentions the defections from the PDRA government were not singular to the military forces. He lists soldiers, diplomats, government officials, pilots and sports teams among his categories. In 1980, a totality of 17,000 troops deserted, and the numbers increased to 30,000-36,000 per year in 1981 and 1982.

[120] Christopher Paul, et al., "Victory Has a Thousand Fathers," 13–15; David Loyn, *In Afghanistan,*151.

[121] Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God*, 116.

[122]David Loyn, *In Afghanistan,* 141–42. Loyn remarks that the Soviet military was not consulted on the concept of the invasion until 10 December 1979. Nikolai Ogarkov, the chief of the General Staff, received his reluctant marching orders from then Defense Minister Ustinov, then-head of KGB, Yuri Andropov, and foreign minister Andrei Gromyko.

The Soviet Army at the inception of the Afghan War was composed mainly of conscript forces, led by a professional officer cadre. Comparable, but in opposition to NATO, the overarching strategic purpose of the training, doctrine, and equipping of their ground forces was to succeed in a nuclear or high-intensity theater-level war in Northern Europe, or Northern China. Further constrained by ponderous bureaucratic processes, the Soviet Army lacked an operational flexibility and mindset that would have enabled them to adapt and evolve to the conditions in Afghanistan, prior to the strategic tipping point of the insertion of American Stinger missiles into the hands of the *Mujahedeen*.[123] Until this point in 1986, the Soviets were floundering, sustaining exorbitant casualties at the hands of the insurgency, and at the hands of the environment.[124] The Soviet Army was able to adapt partially to the different environment. Professional military schools integrated the lessons learned from the Afghan campaign, and prepared officers and soldiers for the conflict by emphasizing attendance at mountain warfare training centers, wherein regional tactics were taught under direction of the local tactical command. The 40th Army leadership established these mountain training centers in theater. The Soviets also derived new, non-linear concepts in reaction to the environment, and attempted to reorganize their units and echelons in order to increase tactical and operational flexibility. The parent organization in the U.S.S.R maintained its strategic focus on the high-intensity template of mechanized warfare with NATO forces. As noted by Grau, "…the Afghanistan war was not an all encompassing experience for the officer corps. Barely 10 percent of the Soviet motorized rifle, armor, aviation and artillery officers served in Afghanistan. However, a majority of airborne, air assault, and Spetsnaz officers served in Afghanistan."[125]

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[123] Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History,* 228–29.

[124] Lester W. Grau, *The Bear Went Over the Mountain, xiv.* COL (ret) David Glantz in Grau's Introduction comments that, for the totality of the conflict, Soviet non-battle injuries (NBI), specifically casualties to disease are appalling; 415,932, of which 115,308 were victims of infectious hepatitis, and 31,080 from typhoid fever. Author attributes this to Soviet military hygiene, and the conditions surrounding troop life.

[125] Lester W. Grau, *The Bear Went Over the Mountain,* xii, xix.

The Soviets departed in defeat in 1989, leaving behind a modestly strong central Afghan government, nationalized, modern military and police forces, and a disorganized, but financially sound, insurgency of Pakistani-supported *mujahedeen*. Surprisingly, the PDPA government, led by Haji Najibullah in Kabul, would remain in power longer than the USSR, falling in March 1992 to the effects of civil war, and the loss of its Russian patron.[126] Chaos ensued as the former *mujahedeen* commanders vied for the remnants of localized and national power, and used the Western-provided weapons, and those captured from the Soviets, to neutralize anything in their path to gain it.[127]

[126] Martin Ewans, *Afghanistan: A Short History*, 245–47; David Loyn, *In Afghanistan,*169–171.

[127] Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God*, 69–70.

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# V. ANALYSIS OF COIN EFFORTS

> The Army's culture is its personality. It reflects the Army's values, philosophy, norms, and unwritten rules. Our culture has a powerful effect because our common underlying assumptions guide behavior and the way the Army processes information as an organization.[128]
>
> LTG Theodore G. Stroup, U.S. Army

## A. TABULAR COMPARISON OF COIN FORCES

The following tables summarize the results of the COIN case studies of Algeria, Vietnam, and Afghanistan. Not surprisingly, engaging in a COIN campaign with ROMO forces does not succeed, as shown in the studies. We can also see in all three examples evidence of evolution of sub-elements of ROMO forces into units more attuned to conducting constabulary and civic-action oriented operations; in the Marine CAP example, the evolution was a polar shift from their traditional mission, and the results were extremely economic relative to a cost/benefit analysis of blood, treasure, and time. In all three examples, we see also the importance of linking military action with national or foreign policy, and the essential nature of similarly tying the military to the inter-agency effort. Control of the tangible support network of an insurgency seems to be a salient point of success or failure for a COIN force, but the Soviet technique offers a warning to operational planners. Using a Maoist comparison, draining the ocean to get at the fish is not a viable technique. Not only did the masses of Afghan refugees generated by such a tactic inflame world opinion, but also from within the war orphan population of young males sprung the foot soldiers of the Taliban, trained and educated in Pakistan Deobandi madrassas in the interwar period.

[128] John Nagl. *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, 5–6. Original quote in Theodore G. Stroup, Jr., "Leadership and Organizational Culture: Actions Speak Louder than Words," Military Review LXXVI, No.1 (January/February 1996), 45.

Collective punishment and escalating repression, as executed by the French Airborne, does not work unless deliberate, and equally overwhelming, consequence management efforts are taken to mitigate the negative effects on a host population; in this, strategic communications are essential.

| "Good" COIN Practices | CAP Platoons in Vietnam | French Airborne in Algeria | Soviet Army in Afghanistan |
|---|---|---|---|
| • The COIN force adhered to several strategic communication principles. | N/A | Y | Y |
| • The COIN force significantly reduced tangible insurgent support. | Y | Y/N | N |
| • The government established or maintained legitimacy in the area of conflict. | Y | Y | N |
| • The government was at least a partial democracy. | N/A | Y | N |
| • COIN force intelligence was adequate to support effective engagement or disruption of insurgents. | Y | Y | N/A |
| • The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas. | N | Y/N | N |
| • The government/state was competent. | Y | N | N |
| • The COIN force avoided excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force. | Y | N | N |
| • The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict. | Y | N | Y |
| • Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict controlled or claimed by the COIN force. | N/A | Y | Y/N |
| • The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported or favored the COIN force. | Y | N | N |
| • The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas. | Y | N | N/A |
| • The COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance. | Y | Y | Y/N |
| • The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas that it controlled or claimed to control. | Y | N/A | N |
| • The perception of security was created or maintained among the population in areas that the COIN force claimed to control. | Y | N | N |
| **Total "Yes"** | **11** | **8** | **4** |
| **Total "No"** | **1** | **8** | **11** |

Table 6. Comparison of "Good" COIN Practices

| "Bad" Coin Practices | CAP Platoons in | French Airborne in | Soviet Army in Afghanistan |
|---|---|---|---|

| | Vietnam | Algeria | |
|---|---|---|---|
| • The COIN force used both collective punishment and escalating repression. | N/A | Y | Y |
| • The primary COIN force was an external occupier. | Y | Y | Y |
| • COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents. | N/A | Y | Y |
| • Militias worked at cross-purposes with the COIN force or government. | N | Y | Y |
| • The COIN force resettled or removed civilian populations for population control. | N/A | Y | Y |
| • COIN force collateral damage was perceived by the population in the area of conflict as worse than the insurgents'. | N/A | Y/N | Y |
| • In the area of conflict, the COIN force was perceived as worse than the insurgents. | N/A | Y | Y |
| • The COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics. | N/A | N/A | Y |
| • The COIN force engaged in more coercion or intimidation than the insurgents. | N/A | N | Y |
| • The insurgent force was individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated. | Y/N | Y/N | Y |
| • The COIN force or its allies relied on looting for sustainment. | N/A | Y | Y |
| • The COIN force and government had different goals or levels of commitment. | N/A | Y | Y/N |
| **Total "Yes"** | **2** | **10** | **12** |
| **Total "No"** | **2** | **3** | **1** |

Table 7. Comparison of "Bad" COIN Practices

## B. USE OF TRADITIONALLY TRAINED ROMO FORCES

### 1. Algeria: French Airborne

The French paratroopers failed as an organization to rectify the insurgent struggle in Algeria; though they enjoyed limited tactical success, the whole of the French effort could not surpass the early stages of repression and violence. The French military, though having colonial and constabulary experience, was organized in the post-WWII era to fight a high intensity conflict on the plains of Europe as an element of NATO. France ultimately lost the war, and Algeria was

formally recognized in 1963 as an independent nation. The region has been a hotbed of Islamic instability ever since, but that is a topic for an ancillary study.

In assessing the force relative to the RAND metrics, the paratroopers were evenly balanced in “yes” or “no” answers for execution of the “Good” COIN practices. They were unable to maintain an operational mission set that inculcated the “Good” COIN practices into their force, and failed to control the tangible support of the insurgents, save for in isolated tactical settings, such as the Battle of Algiers. While the paratroopers were largely regular Army professionals, the vast majority of the French military involved in Algeria were conscripts from metropolitan France, Foreign Legion, or Muslim Battalions raised from the occupied territories in Algeria. The discipline and *esprit de corps* of the regular paratroopers was lacking, as indicated by excesses of violence, looting, and desertion.

A revealing view of the French airborne is afforded by their recorded execution of “Bad” COIN practices, in which they accrued 10 “Yes” and three “No” answers. While the “Good” and “Bad” practices are not perfectly diametric, a positive answer to one side of the chart generally equates to a negative answer on the other side of the chart. Most significant to the study is the mixed answer relative to the populations perceptions of the COIN force, compared to the insurgent. Within Algeria, and over the course of the conflict, the FLN and ALN conducted nearly as much collateral damage and atrocity against the population, as the French did in collective punishment and repression. As the war dragged on, discipline within the COIN force writ large waned, and revenge killings against the Muslim population began to increase among the conscripts, further reducing all French forces from maintaining legitimacy in the eyes of the populace, and the world.

The insurgent organizations, operating both in Algeria and metropolitan France, were able to leverage battlefield events into information operations, and thusly, into political action. Six French Prime Ministers fell to the wavering of public support for the war, and the entirety of the Fourth Republic Government

fell, as a related result of national war fatigue. This weariness was also compounded by the recent defeat in French Indochina, and had profound effects upon mid-to-senior grade soldiers that left one war, and reported directly into another. While the French military was tactically and operationally successful in Algeria, highlighted in the 10th Airborne's victory in the Battle of Algiers, political pressure forced Charles De Gaulle and the Fifth Republic to capitulate and withdraw military forces from Algeria.

### 2. Afghanistan: Soviet Army

The Soviet military failed as a COIN force in Afghanistan; the research shows their failure was nearly the archetype of COIN failure, as they accomplished every "Bad" COIN practice described in the RAND study. While there was a level of theater specific learning, and attempts to conduct several of the "Good" COIN practices, early prolific use of violence against the civilian populace roused the religious fervor of the Pashtun tribal majorities. The Soviets departed their client state in defeat in February 1989, and subsequently fell into their own dissolution as a nation-state on 31 December 1991.

The Soviets attempted to adapt to the environment mid-course, and conducted several attempts at strategic communications with the rural populace, education programs, and economic development. The Soviets also began using smaller scale units, less firepower, and more intelligence driven operations; this is a positive step, opposite of the massive, multi-battalion sweep and clear operations conducted early in the war. From these subsequent attempts, I have drawn the four "Yes" answers for "Good" COIN practices. Though the COIN efforts were made, they were not grounded with equally viable messages espousing the quality and legitimacy of the Afghan government. Labeled as apostate by the pious rural Muslims, the Afghan government lost the historical protection it had from the Pashtun tribesmen, and soon only controlled the progressive urban areas with the support of the Soviets.

The Soviet Army in Afghanistan initially intended to bolster the Afghan government and military against the *Mujahedeen* through sudden decisive victories using high-technology weapons systems, armored vehicles, and aviation dominance. In a Maoist fashion, however, the insurgents maintained refuge among the populace in the rural areas of the country; in attempting to deny the "fish" of the "water," the Soviet 40th Army began a massive pacification effort that could only be described as a "depopulation" campaign. The Soviet Army was too small and too diffused about the population centers in order to take the fight, lethal or otherwise, to the enemy in the rural areas. The Soviets thusly were never able to deny the insurgents the tangible support of the population, and the mujahedeen were able to grow large enough to mass against small elements of the Soviet and Afghan Army, and destroy them piecemeal. This technique became decisive as the insurgents received foreign assistance in the mid-1980s; principle to isolating the Soviets were the threat posed by American Stinger and British Blowpipe anti-aircraft missiles.

The Soviet conscript formations suffered discipline issues, which subsequently manifested in casual atrocities against rural and urban Muslims, theft and robbery, and desertion. Discipline may have also contributed to the astoundingly high rates of non-battle injuries, which were predominantly diseases preventable by common field sanitation techniques. Soviet commanders in Afghanistan attempted to increase professionalism and effectiveness of the forces in country, but COIN techniques, modified organizations, and operational flexibility and decentralization never made inroads within the larger Soviet military. The Soviet Union created recruits and units to fight the ROMO theater-level struggle against NATO or China; on regularly scheduled rotations, they arrived in Afghanistan requiring subsequent training. The level of professionalism in the Soviet Army increased as the war neared its conclusion, which lends credence to the training received in-theater.

## C. USE AND TRAINING OF GENERAL PURPOSE FORCES THAT ADAPTED *EX POST*

### 1. Vietnam: U.S.M.C CAP

The United States involvement in Vietnam ultimately ended in defeat, resulting in the collapse of the South Vietnam government, conquest of the South by North Vietnam, and the subsequent consolidation of the two countries into one Communist nation. The American military prosecuted the war in the manner that it wanted to fight, namely seeking large formations of uniformed enemy regular forces against whom to array overwhelming firepower in an attrition style of warfare. Until GEN Creighton Abrams took command of MAC-V, the metrics of body count and ordinance expended were measures of success, and this mental model became inculcated into the Army's culture. As Abrams attempted to strategically change the direction of the war, he encountered overwhelming organizational inertia; the Army resisted change, the institutional pressures were at too high a level to instill adaptation and flexibility. Similar to the French and Soviet models, the war was a tactical success, but lost on the political side; this demonstrates the adversarial nature of time, relative to when an expeditionary force from a democracy conducts a counterinsurgent campaign. American forces began withdrawing from South Vietnam in 1969, with all military formations gone from the country in 1973.

The Marine CAP platoons evolved from the U.S.M.C organizational history of small wars, a role in which from their inception was the Marines niche within the nation's defense policies. Massed operations such those in WWII and Korea were an abnormality for the Marines, a small element that had an organizational culture and affinity for "relational-maneuver" warfare, as described by Edward Luttwak. The CAP platoons tallied 11 "yes" answers for the "Good" COIN practice, and two "yes" answers for "Bad" COIN practices. Key "Yes" answers include control of the insurgents tangible support sources, perceptions of legitimacy of the COIN force, and perceptions of security offered by the COIN

force. Fifteen Marines, specially selected and amiable to the Asiatic population, when coupled with 30 Popular Forces, were more than adequate to defend an area of 5 square miles and 5,000 civilian population. The Marines lived in the town with the populace, and drew a sizable portion of their material sustenance from the village. They were tactical patrolling masters, preferring to conduct night patrols and ambushes with small arms and grenades; not relying on heavy artillery, the Marines were surgically judicious with force, which maintained the support and respect of the villagers.

Examining a small organization in a small sector with metrics that examine operational-level characteristics is difficult; I assessed a number of characteristics, both “Good” and “Bad”, as Not Applicable. Without the financial wherewithal of a modern CERP program, the CAP could not develop local businesses or infrastructure through financial means. They did, however, secure the area from VC tax collectors, which enabled more agrarian revenue to stay within the local economy. The COIN force did not create new grievances against the governance, but the Revolutionary Development forces, as agents of the Saigon government, created issues within the CAP zone; this was indicative of the polarity between the rural populace base, and the urban ruling elites. The metrics of success are clear; in the Bihn Nghia village example, the Marines departed the area in late 1967, and the PF militia had been professionalized to the point of attaining tactical superiority over the Vietcong. The area remained pacified until the NVA traversed it on their final push into Saigon in 1975.

The difficulty in replicating the Marine’s success lies in the organizational cost it took to create the CAP platoons. The first platoon was specially selected from light infantrymen from the entirety of an 800 man conventional battalion; as the program continued, I Corps established a mission specific in-theater training mechanisms, and codified selection criteria. The friction lies within the requirements of only the best Marines; no subordinate commander wants to lose a good person to something that is outside of the larger mission set of the parent unit. The Marine’s personnel limitation was not increased to compensate for the

CAP program, creating a zero-sum game of manpower between the conventional ROMO formations, and the COIN CAP organizations. As with any small group of isolated soldiers, the Marines ran tremendous risks in the early stages of their operations, before they strengthened their relationship with the villagers, and truthful information began to flow about enemy composition, disposition, and strength. A further friction exists when considering instituting this model, especially when dealing with the contemporary, professional military: if the larger institution does not recognize the special assignment, individuals may find themselves in threat of career advancement, or decreased opportunities for subsequent positions of increased responsibility.

## D. CREATION AND TRAINING OF SPECIAL PURPOSE FORCES *EX ANTE*

### 1. Philippines: Philippine Army Battalion Combat Teams

The Philippines and the Hukbalahap (Huk) Rebellion of the early 1950s was a proto-western democracy versus a Maoist communist insurgency, and represents a level of success as both a former American protectorate, and in the dramatic reorganization and preparation of troops prior to engaging in the contested areas.[129] I chose not to include this case study as my focus was on expeditionary COIN forces, their training, and their effectiveness. The Philippine experience contains a number of interesting observations that are germane to the larger discussion, especially as we consider the institutional inflexibility and lack of organizational agility and evolution among the three superpowers described earlier. Among these are restructuring the military to emphasize population outreach and civil action, decentralizing control and authority, and the willingness of the Philippine government to restructure and reorganize the

[129] Larry E. Cable, *Conflict of Myths,* 52–54.

military in order to win the war they were involved in. These observations are not polar opposites of the case studies, but are significantly different enough to warrant comment, and further study.

Then-Philippine Secretary of Defense Ramón Magsaysay identified one of the grievances that the Huk rebellion had was with the Philippine Armed Forces (PAF); their actions sent strategic communications to the populace, and the message was that the Quirino administration held the population in derision. The population needed to trust the PAF, because the military would be the executors of the central government's policies. The PAF initially was modeled after American Army formations, and had many veterans of WWII among its officers and NCOs. The PAF routinely conducted intimidation and extortion operations against the rural population, and had a level of corruptness and incompetence that was unacceptable.[130]

Magsaysay boldly attacked the incompetence and corruption through "summery discharges, court-martials of the guilty and field promotions of the deserving."[131] Working with the American Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG), Magsaysay was able to increase rations and pay for the soldiers, ending habits of foraging and commandeering resources from the host populace; this incremental step greatly improved soldier morale.[132] President Quirino instituted wide changes in the operational structure of the war, sectoring the contested zone into four Military Area Commands, and assigning to each area an Army Battalion Combat Team (BCT). The BCTs, commanded by young officers between the ages of 25 and 33, were modeled loosely on an American light infantry battalion, but intended to be agile and flexible, and to maintain a high operational tempo of both lethal and non-lethal activities. They were designed to

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130 Lawrence M. Greenburg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection: A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines, 1946-1955* (Washington: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1987) http://www.history.army.mil/books/coldwar/huk/huk-fm.htm (accessed 30 September 2010), 82–83.

131 Larry E. Cable, *Conflict of Myths,* 54.

132 Lawrence M. Greenburg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection,* 100.

be employed in small unit operations, focusing on the squad and platoon levels of organization as the decisive echelon, versus the emphasis that battalions and brigades were given by the Fort Leavenworth Command and General Staff College.[133]

As the BCTs prosecuted the kinetic fight against the Huks, reorganized and more representative of the central governments values, the central government pursued other key grievances that lent weight to the Huk rebellion. The government executed population relocation, but combined it with a positive information campaign that preempted counter-propaganda by the Huks; Magsaysay and JUSMAG went as far as to recruit former Huks to populate relocation camps, and used radio and television to broadcast their stories to their former comrades. The population resettlement/relocation program was combined, publically, with land reform acts, addressing yet another root cause of instability.[134]

The BCTs conducted COIN operations integral to the furtherance of governmental policies. In addition to civic action and policing tasks, the military had reacquired the populace's trust to a degree that they were used to secure national level elections, creating a "honest and tranquil election even by American standards, and an erosion in the strength of the incumbent Liberal Party". The PAF used Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets to assist in securing the polling stations, which had the effect of further inculcating the national values into the next generation of military leaders.[135]

The Philippine government successfully nested a number of complementary, asymmetric, and concurrent efforts to address the Huk rebellion. In order to more efficiently execute the kinetic aspects of the campaign, the PAF

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[133] Larry E. Cable, *Conflict of Myths,* 54–55, 57; Lawrence M. Greenburg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection,* 86–87.

[134] Lawrence M. Greenburg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection,* 88–90.

[135] Larry E. Cable, *Conflict of Myths*, 61; Lansdale, Edward G. *In the Midst of Wars: An American's Mission to Southeast Asia* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1991), 88–92.

formed hybrid BCTs, manned by specially selected leaders, and stringently cleansed of corrupt and incompetent members. Addressing a salient issue of the Huks, the Philippine government underwent bold restructuring of land ownership policies, and placed a heavy emphasis on communicating the changes to the populace in and around the contested zone. Lastly, by instilling the values system of the nation into the military, the PAF was entrusted to secure the most sovereign of events during an insurgency, a national vote. A metric of the honest conduct of the vote is indicated by the decrease in strength of the incumbent party.

## E. THE WAY AHEAD

Magsaysay's wholesale reorganization of his nation's armed forces stands in direct contravention to Gian Gentile's contemporary views on the United States armed forces. Gentile argues that, while nation building (Iraq and Afghanistan) have become the mission set of the modern U.S. Army, the skills required to execute high-intensity warfare have atrophied, and placed America's strategic defense and force projection capabilities at risk. As soon as possible, the nation and military must return to preparing for the next high intensity fight, because the military that has developed over the last decade is not capable of executing those mission sets.[136]

As this study has highlighted, successful prosecution of a COIN struggle may not rest in the hands of some theoretical hybrid force of standing cultural warriors, regionally affiliated, linguistically capable, and predisposed to constabulary and civic action mission sets, as Edward Luttwak would advocate. Through the failure of the Soviet, French, and American ROMO formations during their respective trials, this study does demonstrate that COIN is not a lesser-included offense of the wider Range of Military Operations; if that was the

136 Gian P. Gentile, "Let's Build an Army to Win All Wars," Joint Forces Quarterly 52, 1st Quarter (2009), 27–33, http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Let's+build+an+army+to+win+all+wars.-a0193510865 (accessed 13 October 2010), 27.

case, the aforementioned conventional forces would have had higher success rates, and scored higher on the RAND “Good and Bad” practices scale.

This study draws a correlation between training for COIN, and effectiveness at COIN; it also illustrates a level of the positive effects of selectivity in personnel staffing. Each of the ROMO forces had small groups and key leaders within the larger service that demonstrated levels of flexibility and adaptive learning, and subsequently attempted to institutionalize some of that knowledge though in-theater schools. This study alludes to contemporary debates currently conducted at the highest echelons of national security. One side advocates maintaining the preponderance of our military power oriented on strategic deterrence, and attaining decisive victory over a peer or near-peer competitor. The other side accepts the likelihood of small-scale conflicts with non-state actors, or rogue elements originating from failed states, and seeks to institutionalize the lessons learned from the contemporary conflicts. Paul Grant highlights a number of the contemporary training tasks and regimens that conventional U.S. Army Soldiers experience prior to deployment; a potential topic for further research would apply the RAND metrics to a contemporary Army formation in Afghanistan or Iraq, and then correlate that data set to the training models that Grant discusses to determine corollary effects. The findings from this subsequent study could form further impetus to institutionalize the lessons learned in the GWOT, and continue to grow and develop as a military with manifold capabilities within the complex geopolitical environment, rather than to return merely to the Fulda Gap, as Gian Gentile would have us do.

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# APPENDIX: A WAY AHEAD FOR RSTA SQUADRONS EX POST

## A. INTRODUCTION

The War in Afghanistan will continue for a number of years; this is a political concern, but the military stands in support of the civilian leadership, and must accomplish the missions issued to it. The U.S. Army ROMO forces have done an excellent job in adopting and evolving to the COIN environment in Afghanistan with the assets made available to it. Without going through the complete DOTMLPF analysis within the Army Acquisitions methodology, the following is a tactical leader's perspective of a way to improve the operational capabilities of an existing organization – the Light Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target Acquisition (RSTA) Cavalry Squadron.

As cited from the Defense Acquisitions University Glossary of Defense Acquisition Acronyms and Terms, DOTMLPF is:

> …the first substep in the Functional Solution Analysis (FSA). It determines whether an integrated Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and education, Personnel, and Facilities (DOTMLPF) approach (that is, a non-materiel approach) or a materiel approach is required to fill the capability gaps identified in the Functional Need Analysis (FNA). Capability proposals may involve a mix of both DOTMLPF and materiel changes.
>
> - Doctrine: the way we fight, e.g., emphasizing maneuver warfare combined air-ground campaigns
> - Organization: how we organize to fight; divisions, air wings, Marine-Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs), etc.
> - Training: how we prepare to fight tactically; basic training to advanced individual training, various types of unit training, joint exercises, etc.
> - Materiel: all the "stuff" necessary to equip our forces, that is, weapons, spares, etc. so they can do operate effectively
> - Leadership and education: how we prepare our leaders to lead the fight from squad leader to 4-star general/admiral; professional development

- Personnel: availability of qualified people for peacetime, wartime, and various contingency operations

- Facilities: real property; installations and industrial facilities (e.g., government owned ammunition production facilities) that support our forces[137]

Without a formal MTOE change, an Army BCT Commander could institute the following changes to a RSTA formation by reallocating resources from within the BCT organization, and placing command emphasis upon revised motorized element training standards. Decisions of this nature are similar to that faced by the Marine battalion commanders relative to the CAP platoons in Vietnam; to enable success in one area, a commander may have to accept risk in another.

There are two capability shortcomings that the 1-61 Cavalry Squadron had to develop and resource during the foreshortened 12-month tour that could be reviewed through an organizational capacity microscope, insofar as they were requirements that were not officially sanctioned by the existing Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition (RSTA) Modified Table of Organization (MTOE) or Mission Essential Task List (METL). The first is the actual size of the Squadron; doctrinally, the Squadron has approximately 500 soldiers, and is divided into three combat Troops, one Combat Support Troop, and one Headquarters Troop.

For the variety of missions that RSTA Squadrons are used to support the Global War on Terror, this troop strength is not enough. Boring slightly into that detail is the second shortcoming, which is the dismounted nature of the Charlie Troop organization. Charlie Troop is approximately the size of a traditional light infantry company (110 Soldiers), minus one 33-man platoon. This Cavalry Troop in the modern RSTA concept is designed to be employed in a dismounted

[137] Defense Acquisition University, "DOTMLPF Analysis," ACQuipedia: Your Online Acquisition Library, https://acc.dau.mil/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=28870&view=w (accessed 30 November 2010).

function in a traditional ROMO environment; for the GWOT in Afghanistan, this is an undesirable condition.[138]

In order to highlight the key points of the capability gap, we will define the RSTA conceptually from what is designed to do, both regarding men and material, and I will briefly remark upon a few scenarios from OEF Rotation 08-09 that highlight the deltas in these capabilities. To successfully execute the GWOT in the capacity that combatant commanders are using them, Light, Airborne and Air Assault RSTA Squadrons need to increase in size by a maneuver Troop, all Troops need to be MTOE as mounted assets, and Squadron Command and Control node needs additional personnel above those authorized.

## B. COMBAT POWER INCREASE.

The astute reader will note that the platoon math does not add up; eight combat platoons organic, but nine committed to the fight in some manner. C/1-61 organically had 30-33-man dismounted platoons, while the Alpha and Bravo mounted platoons were typically 16-20 man in strength. 1-61 CAV leadership knew this difference would exist about one month before the deployment and, using a capable young officer in the operations staff, and a senior E6 squad leader, made the difficult decision and sub-divided C/1-61 into three mounted platoons; one of the A/1-61 platoons was actually 2/C/1-61, in its recombined, smaller state. For the remainder of the discussion, consider an average Cavalry platoon to comprise four vehicles and 16 Troopers.

One crucial aspect was the fact that, despite two recent JRTC Rotations emphasizing the Troop and Platoon echelons of training, these three platoons had never trained in this manner of organization, nor had the Troop commanders trained in this fashion. Force projection quickly became an issue during the rotation. The general overhead to conduct force protection on a FOB is generally proportional to its size; the large Squadron FOB at Gardez required a platoon

[138] Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-20.96 (Reconnaissance and Cavalry Squadron)*, 7-6–7-8. Chapter 7 of FM 3-20.96 focuses on Stability Operations, and largely quantifies the mission set and capabilities of a Cavalry Squadron in a low-intensity environment.

plus to conduct FORCEPRO, while the smaller Troop level FOBs at Wilderness, Jaji, and Zormat had section (two vehicles, 8-10 men) or higher requirements. The friction comes when the only available combat power at a FOB or COP (combat outpost, the smaller, Troop-level FOBs) is that combat power that is either up in the guard towers, or is scheduled to go up in the towers six hours from hence.

Though pushing combat power out into the Area of Responsibility (AOR), and getting them closer to the effected population, is a critical nature of the COIN fight, the overhead that comes from a material and force protection standpoint is nearly insurmountable unless further troop strength is available to the AOR Commander. As an operation wears on and time passes, the fatigue sets into the soldiers who go out on patrol every day for months, and pull a three-to-six-hour guard tour of duty every night; there is no rotation off the line, or ever the potential for rotation. Truly imbedding into the effected populace for an extended duration of time is nearly impossible, because that combat platoon has duties during the night at the FOB or COP.

As a result of reinvigorated efforts on the Khost-Gardez Road Project, and a geometric increase in activity of the Haqqani Network of Al Qaeda, the summer of 2008 saw 1-61 Cavalry in Paktya transition from a BCT economy of force operation, to the kinetically intense Battle for the K-G Pass. From JUN-AUG 08, 1-61 CAV, re-tasked as the Divisional Decisive Operation but not "re-resourced" as such, had to accept extreme operational risk in Zormat and Jaji, and pulled two of the three available platoons from those commanders into the Zadran Arc districts.[139] The enemy forces in the Zormat region quickly realized that the ISAF presence in the region had nearly vanished, and attacks against governance buildings and persons, infrastructure, and the COP increased dramatically. A similar situation, to a lesser extent, happened vicinity Jaji and the Border Control Points vicinity Pakistan. Following the Battle of the K-G Pass, 4/101 BCT returned the B/1-61 unit to Paktya, necessitating the construction of yet another

[139] TF Currahee, *Afghan Commander AAR Book*, 27-–28.

COP in the KG Pass; this transition did not occur and B/1-61 did not begin executing operations until the last weeks of November 2008: too little, too late.[140]

The preponderance of forces that the American military will detail to the Afghanistan campaign will be, for the foreseeable future, light in orientation (not Mechanized or Classical Armor Heavy). Light, Airborne and Air Assault RSTA Squadrons will continue to be employed as "property owners," vice the traditional reconnaissance and screening missions they are designed, trained, manned and equipped to execute. The Department of the Army needs to conduct a MTOE review in a hasty manner and authorize a fourth maneuver Troop to each Squadron organization; Cavalry squadrons, at 500 or less men, have for at least three consecutive years between 2006 and 2009, been assigned to execute the exact same task that Infantry battalions, at 900-1000 men, are expected to execute. Clever, innovative leadership, mental flexibility, reliance on technology, and development and use of host nation security forces have granted limited success to these Cavalry organizations with their Spartan manning; it is only a matter of time before something more dramatic happens due to lack of strength.

## C. COMPLETE MOUNTED CAPACITY.

As noted above, the Charlie Troop organization in a Cavalry Squadron is designed to be a dismounted asset, with a minimal vehicular trace.[141] The two platoons of a Charlie Troop are 30-33 men, organized into three maneuver squads and an austere platoon headquarters. The troop headquarters has two man-portable 60mm mortar systems, and administratively control the Squadron asset of two sniper teams. This is an outstanding organization for an environment that is linear in nature, closer in a spatial sense, and more densely vegetated; it would even work well in a dense, urban environment. In the perfect storm that is Afghanistan, a dismounted element is less than ideal. The amount

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[140] U.S. Department of Defense, "DoD News Briefing with Colonel John P. Johnson," 3–4. COL Johnson emphasizes the Khost-Gardez Road, and the importance for the economic development for the AOR.

[141] Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM *3-20.96 (Reconnaissance and Cavalry Squadron)*, 1-8–1-9.

of space and population that an organization needs to service is far greater than the organization is designed to execute, and necessitates rapid tactical mobility.

Though the 4/101 BCT and 1/61 CAV may have been 80% or higher qualified as Air Assault soldiers, and C/1-61 CAV had a disproportionately high amount of Air Assault, Ranger and Pathfinder qualified Troopers, the limitation in conducting vertical envelopment came from the rotary wing air frame availability and the terrain constrictions afforded in the KG Pass AOR. Approval for a non-standard Helicopter Landing Zone was a tiresome, bureaucratic process with nearly a 96-hour lag time between approval at Squadron level, and approval at Division level (the echelon that controlled both the airframes and the operational approval). At the tactical level, in order to react to the requirements of the effected populace and the actions of a freethinking enemy force, Troop commanders required tactical mobility that was available 24-7, and on a moment's notice.

The weather in Paktya, relative to the various bases where the airframes were based, served to further limit the ability of rotary wing to be responsive to the maneuver commander; conventional army helicopters are limited to 1000 feet ceilings and three nautical miles of visibility, compounded by the requirements for at least 35% illumination (ambient) during periods of limited visibility. Special Operations airframes, as well as Air Force HH-60 Combat, Search and Rescue (CSAR) aircraft have increased tolerances due to technology and training/certification, but were sporadically available to service a conventional Cavalry unit.

Finally, Paktya is isolated due to geography; the Seti Kandow pass, linking the Khost Bowl (where the 4/101 BCT and the preponderance of the General Purpose Forces airframes were stationed) and the Zormat Valley (that contains Gardez city and the immediate environs), is one of the few gateways for air transit, and is at an elevation of 12,000 feet. Operations at this elevation are

limited by both a decreased Aircraft Load, and a reduced capacity to successfully hover or land.

The actual Area of Operations that the Squadron assigned to C/1-61 was far more compressed than that assigned to the other maneuver troops in Zormat and Jaji Ayrub, but there was still a substantial amount of distance that the Troopers of Charlie had to cover on a routine basis. The terrain was also far more vertically differentiated that the flat plains of the other two AOs; COP Wilderness sat at 5,000 feet elevation, and some of the patrol routes, villages and key terrain objectives were at 9,500 feet or higher. Soldiers load was tremendous; 50 pounds of body armor and protective equipment, plus 30 to 50 more pounds of weapons, ammunition, and water.[142] To operate in this environment with any expectations of success, C/1-61 needed to be mounted, either in Uparmored High Mobility Multi-wheeled Vehicles (UAH), or Mine-resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAP).

The friction arises in the MTOE of the organization, which drives the METL under which they are equipped and trained. Like the manner in which the structure and size of the Squadron limits the manner in which it can be employed, coding within the MTOE of the Charlie Troop as a dismounted force limits the amount of institutional training on vehicular operations that the unit can conduct at home station. The training funds, the time, and the training platforms were not available to C/1-61 during the train up, despite the fact that the Squadron and BCT both knew that there was a pre-positioned fleet of vehicles for all the troops when they arrived in country. The organizational training mechanisms within the bureaucratic process forced C/1-61 to train along its METL task list; conduct dismounted area and point reconnaissance, conduct counter-sniper operations, and enter building/clear room, and a further hybrid of collective tasks that combines a series of Long Range Surveillance Detachment and standard Light Infantry METLs.

142 TF Currahee, *Afghan Commander AAR Book*, 37.

The lack of training on vehicles, and the commiserate lack of a vehicular culture, caused a number of organizational and incidental frictions that could have been mitigated. Licensed, though inexperienced, drivers routinely rolled vehicles on the rough terrain, or managed to mechanically disable them by attempting maneuvers that more seasoned crewmen and leaders would not have attempted. Leaders did not enforce vehicle load plans stringently; those leaders had never been strictly inculcated into a mounted mentality. On the constrictive roads of the K-G Pass, gunners occasionally impacted passing traffic with the barrels of their heavy crew-served weapons, generating both injuries to the gunners, and damage to the host nation vehicles, further widening the gulf between the populace and the ISAF force. Similarly, gunners and vehicle commanders had difficulty both identifying targets, and engaging them as a crew.

This skill set, commonly developed over the career of a 19D Cavalry Scout, was further compounded by the severe vertical nature of the terrain. A modern UAH or MRAP has an intensely sophisticated Command and Control suite in each vehicle, and it requires an equally sophisticated maintenance schedule. Due both to the high operational tempo, and the lack of a motorized culture, disciplined and routine maintenance of the vehicles was not accomplished by the Troopers of C/1-61, and often manifested in non-mission-capable vehicles, or communications that failed during a mission.[143]

Changing the MTOE of the Charlie Troop organization from a dismounted capacity to a mounted capacity will directly impact the home-station training priorities, changing the organizational culture and creating a more efficient, effective unit that will thrive in an Afghanistan environment.

## D. CONCLUSION

The GWOT will continue into the near future, and COCOMs will continue to assign RSTA Squadrons in property-owning, non-reconnaissance-oriented operational mission sets. Changing the MTOE of a Light, Air Assault or Airborne

[143] TF Currahee, *Afghan Commander AAR Book*, 37–38.

RSTA Squadron is critical to ensuring the ability of these RSTA Squadrons to accomplish any mission that they are given within the CENTCOM AOR. These changes should principally rotate around expanding the strength of the whole squadron by one Cavalry Troop of 19D Cavalry Scouts, and by reorganizing the Charlie Troop organization from a dismounted to a mounted asset for the maneuver commander. A 600-man enhanced Light Cavalry Squadron would not empirically equal an 800-1000 man light infantry battalion; however, the mental flexibility, initiative, imagination, and motivation of Cavalry Troopers and leaders would shortly overcome the deficit, and capitalize upon the investment of additional Troopers and vehicles.

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